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WATER AND GOLD

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WATER AND GOLD

BY

LEWIS STANTON PALEN

AS TOLD TO HIM BY

CHARLES G. HEDLUND

NEW YORK

E. P. DUTTON & CO., INC.

1930

Hedlund

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PREFATORY NOTE

MEN say that this is a drab age, with all the color and blazonry of the lists and armored knights replaced by the soot of industry and toil. Some go even farther and assert that many of those who guide the engines of production are little more than parts of the droning machines before which they stand. Mental keenness and manual skill they must have in this day of precision and specialization, yet withal they have lost some great human element—become dangerously near the robot, this creation of our grinding age.

What is this element that has vanished and has taken with it so much of the romance of life? Is it not personal adventure—the chance of meeting any day along the great highroad something picturesque, something that may require a mustering of all the courage and strength and leave behind it the thrill of a brigand worsted or a dragon slain?

What real chance of adventure in his own life has the present existence left to ordinary man? For those who can command the power there is the undying sat-

isfaction of some great creative gamble launched upon the battlefield of economic strife or of sponsored expeditions to the frozen poles, from where they can radio back the strange details of their daily life.

Even battle, which had within the short span of a few centuries the fairest lady in the land for its queen, has lost at once its glamor and high patronage. War today, however cabinets may seek to bolster it with fanfares and colored jackets, has become recognized by many as the acme of all that is inhuman and counts woman as its most relentless enemy.

In another, though perhaps lesser realm, sail has given way to steam, and all the sea is mechanized as thoroughly as some great central hive of industry. With the sails have gone the sailors, the lives they led and the characters they developed.

For the greater part of the geographical world all this is true, and I cite it only to subscribe rather than to controvert. But fortunately for those of us who love to adventure vicariously there are still exceptions to this growing general rule. In a little New Jersey town, where he works as a master machinist, I had the great good fortune to come into touch with one of these wanderers of yesterday who knows the Seven Seas and the major part of the African continent as intimately as the ordinary commuter knows the fac-

tory-chimneys and the refuse-dumps along the line of his daily travel.

Looking out over the Delaware not far from where Washington crossed it five generations ago, I sat and tried to make a record of the life vagaries of this man and now feel, with the volume complete, that the task is far from fairly done. There is some great element lacking in the written page. A perfect mirror must have as a background that most fluid and sensitive of metals, quicksilver, combined with a stabilizing alloy that will hold it in place and still allow it to retain all its powers of reflection.

To be a worthy mirror of the life and character of "Charlie" Hedlund would require all the vivacious mobility of a mercurial mind together with a registering alloy of expression such as I must admit at the end of my task have not been mine. There is a humor, an immeasurable tenderness, coupled with immense physical power in the man which is but poorly reflected in our written tales of adventure.

I spent several weeks with him and his attractive family in their restful, dignified home. An adorable little tow-head of a grandson, not yet two years old, reproduced in a most amusing way the good humor and sturdiness of his forbear. The spirit of the grandfather dominated the entire household in a striking

manner, just as it must have the workshops where he has been head-machinist, controlling the giant lathes that cut to half a thousandth of an inch. He is one of the finest examples of gentleness and strength that it has ever been my lot to know.

Realizing this more and more as we worked through the apparently incongruous and contradictory tales of his early life, I shared with him the fear which he voiced as to what people might think of him from some of the story we were putting together. He holds a position of great respect in his little community. Practically no one there knows that he was ever in Africa, was a sailor or anything other than a machinist all his days. I found that even his family had heard little of his gold-mining and other experiences south of the line. Yet he is not a reticent man. This was simply another period of his life, locked away in the strong-box of his memory.

On two particular points his fear of being misunderstood should in justice be expressed and the matters clarified. The first goes best in his own words, as nearly as I can now reproduce them.

"You mustn't think from all these stories I'm telling you about drinking so much that I was ever a guzzler. No, far from that. As an ordinary seaman and younger A.B. I drank very little in comparison with

the others around me. In these last twenty-five years since coming to America I have never been awash but three times, and then only when there was strong provocation. The first was when our daughter died—that broke me up. The second . . . I can't recall now what this second occasion was.

"And the third time was when that big Swedish woman, about whom my wife and I were telling you the other evening, did something that nobody, even a woman, ought to be allowed to do and get away with unpunished. A good, sound thrashing was coming to her for that, but of course I couldn't give it to her . . . sober, so I went and got properly drunk—and it took her husband and two others to keep me from giving her all she deserved."

Even this requires sub-annotation. You must know the sense of justice and the gentleness in the man to have the balanced picture.

The second matter on which Mr. Hedlund is definitely disturbed is the discrepancy which he found existing between his account of the incidents following the defeat of Lo Bengula's black hordes before Bulawayo and that given in a book on South Africa which I secured for him to read after we had completed this section of the manuscript. His memory of the fighting and the peace seemed to me so clear,

when he was narrating these incidents, that I was a little at a loss to know how to account for his very evident discomfiture over the variation between his and the "book" versions. He even went so far as to say that he wondered whether I would want to go on with the work after finding him to be "wrong" in this matter. Through his very concern and by checking in many instances—where it was possible—details he gave of other occurrences, I not only became persuaded of his general accuracy—except in the matter of certain dates—but also sensible of his marked anxiety for the correctness of his record. He insisted that his story of the Bulawayo days and the book account of the movements of Lo Bengula must be reconciled and any inconsistent elements in his own omitted.

To this end I consulted several works in the British Museum on my way through London and was nowhere able to find an absolutely clear statement on the point in dispute that would warrant me in revising Mr. Hedlund's version. Consequently I have elected to allow his story of the meeting of Cecil Rhodes and Lo Bengula to stand, with this extenuating explanation to palliate any possible historical error there may be in his memory of the incidents cited.

When I wrote him to this effect and told him that

I wished to be allowed to let his account of the Bulawayo affair stand as he had originally given it to me, if he felt satisfied himself with his memory of the events, he answered me in part as follows:

"With reference to Lo Bengula, it has always been a mystery among the whites of Africa whether he was killed in the Matabele Rebellion of 1893 or died of fever shortly afterward in the Zambezi country as was so persistently reported. Whatever may be the belief of others on this point, I can vouch for the fact that he was actively present in the 1896–97 Rebellion, and I would defy all the historians in the world on this. I cannot change or do anything further to the Lo Bengula incident as I have already given it to you."

And one final word as to the language in which the narrative is cast. Deeply as I regret having to make the confession, it is nowhere as picturesque as Mr. Hedlund's own form of expression. This was sharp, terse, humorous Swedish-English, which compelled me either to set down the whole volume in dialect or adopt the only other alternative I saw—of throwing it into as direct and simple a narrative style as I had at my command.

To his ideas I have sought to be meticulously true. He led a rough, futureless life through the first years at sea. Something fine within him developed during

the contact with the problems of handling natives and working among the different nationals in Africa, and out of it all he brought with him a rounded character that has made for him a rich family life and won him universal respect from those in his present world. It requires no stretch of the imagination, once you know him, to listen to his tales of his contacts with that other South African miner—Cecil Rhodes.

L. S. P.

Juan-les-Pins, France,
February, 1930.

PART I

THE WATER

CHAPTER I

Cobbler, Farmer, Chimney-sweep, Sailor

SO it's a story you want from a sailor. Well, if you had asked twenty or, even better, thirty years ago, you would have had a real one. But I'm afraid that now it must be rather a snatchy affair. I'm still six feet to the top of the mast and can make what looks like a fair sailor's splice, but the memory isn't as nimble as it once was. Yet we'll sign it on, if you say so, for "full and plenty" and see what it can do before the mast.

You know that in Sweden our kroner is divided into one hundred öre, the equivalent of your word "cent." Well, that was the name—*Öre*—of what I should now have to call a dirty little brig but what was in those early 'eighties an imposing-looking craft for one to be cook on. She lay alongside the wharf at Stockholm and was bound for England with a cargo of lumber that filled her hold and ran over the sides of her deck like a thatched roof on a farmhouse. It would take about ten or eleven days to the mouth of the Humber. I was about fifteen or sixteen then, as tall as I am now, weighed around one hundred seventy-five and was as

hard as Swedish farm-life and other work could make me. As those seemed to be the accepted requirements for the post of cook on such a craft, I walked aboard and signed the articles.

We made as far as Oresund, the strait between Sweden and Denmark, and there dropped anchor. The captain and second mate went ashore for some reason and left the rest of us to bargain and deal with the *katdryers*, or bumboats, that came alongside to pick up all our old rope and other junk, for which they paid in rum. It happened that there was a goodly supply of saleable material but no bottles in which to put the spirits, so I had to fill up all the pots and pans in the galley with the "pay."

In those days I was not very fond of any kind of grog and so remained the nearest to sober of all the crew, not excepting the first mate, for he took aboard so much of the stuff that he had foundered in his cabin long before the captain and the second officer came back on board. When these two other members of the after mess did appear alongside, they showed that they must have taken a full cargo of old rope or something else ashore with them, as they were both farther gone than almost any of the crew.

The fight started over the captain's insistence on weighing anchor and getting under way. There were not enough sober men in the crew to walk the windlass round and heave the anchor up. Anyway, it would have been suicide if we had succeeded, for the officers

could never have navigated the ship into the open sea with only a drunken hand at the wheel. But we never got that far in the attempt. A gang of us took our places at the capstan-bars, and someone started a chantey. It was the first one I had ever heard; yet it failed of its purpose, for there were not enough who could keep their feet to walk the capstan round. Because we couldn't raise the anchor, the captain and the second mate started laying on to us. We were naturally not in the right condition to stand by for thrashings, and so the scrap was on.

I had to take on the second mate, as he was the bruiser of the officers' mess. In those days mates in general were a hard-fisted lot and used to treat the hands in the fo'castle pretty rough at times. Now don't misunderstand me right at the outset and believe that I was ever a fighting man for the mere fun of smashing heads. But you must realize that I had to do a good bit of it in my day just to maintain the dignity and self-respect of one of my tonnage and lines.

On the *Öre* I was new at the game and did not use good judgment. We were in a general scrap on top of the lumber piled on the deck. There was only a line along the outer edge of the cargo where the rail would naturally have been, as the lumber was about six or seven feet above the deck and hung outboard at the sides. When I singled out the mate and had him in fair fight, I hit him too hard once and sent him clean over the rope into the sea. That chastened him enough

to make him swim until we could drop a line and haul him aboard again.

"Mutiny!" was what the captain called it and what he entered in the log. The word sobered down the fo'castle and started discussion as to what we had better do about it. Some were for skipping off at once, before the old man got on an even keel himself; others said he couldn't do more than dock our pay. The facts were, though I did not guess them at the time on account of my newness in the game, that the captain did this more to scare the boys than for anything else, in the hope they would run away the moment they came back to Sweden, if he kept quiet and did not prefer charges against them in the British court. I afterwards learned this was a familiar practice among the rougher lot of masters—so to frighten the crew with threats of punishment before the home tribunals as to induce them to run away the moment they were in port and thus save him the necessity of paying them. That allowed him to pocket their wages.

The following morning, when everybody on board had sobered up, we hove anchor and made out through the Skager Rack and Cattegat. Only one little incident held us up on the way to the English coast. It was a fine summer day, so calm that the ship was hardly moving. Two of the other boys and I decided to have a swim right in the middle of the North Sea and were overboard before an officer spied us. When he told us that part of the sea was particularly infested

with sharks, you should have seen the speed with which we got back up the Jacob's ladder. Through some peculiar trick of memory that little scare has always remained vivid in my mind.

After unloading our lumber at Hull and taking on a cargo of coal at Grimsby, we were on our way back to Sweden without having a word said to us about the mutiny. Perhaps it would be passed, because of the officers' own share in the blame. But something worse than the threat of the court came to hang over our heads. Shortly after we were well at sea, the ship sprang a leak—and we pumped all the rest of that voyage!

The handle on the wheel of the pump had a rope attached to it for a second man to pull and thus help the one who was turning the wheel. Over this rope and its use I got into an unfortunate argument with the first mate. It was lucky that he was a little fellow, for the sea was rough and I had to fight according to the roll of the ship. He was clever with his fists but was really only a handful, and it was a shame to get into trouble with a little man like that. While we worked our hearts out over the pumps, the rumor was that we were going to the court for mutiny, so that the majority were scared stiff.

When we arrived at Haparanda, the Swedish port at the very northern end of the Gulf of Bothnia, the captain put us all under arrest and had us up before the judge. It was a very old-fashioned court, where

his honor took us all into a side-room and gave us a good lecture. He asked us if we had lawyers to defend us. I happened to be talkative or at least had nerve enough to speak up, so that everything was shoved on me. Then the judge took us back in the big court-room.

"Are you guilty of mutiny?" he demanded. I asked him to explain what mutiny meant. He read something out of a book, whereupon I told him I was not guilty of *that*. He then asked me to tell him exactly what had happened.

"The second mate came on board drunk and started a quarrel. I hit him in self-defence, and he fell overboard."

The judge dismissed the case and ordered the captain to pay us in full. That was my first experience with ship's officers and courts and with playing lawyer for a whole crew. You may think me boastful to tell it in just this way or that I am trying to make a grown man of myself before the time. But it isn't that. Boys of fifteen and sixteen who had lived through what I had in the Sweden of those days had very often developed all their physical powers by then and were ready to take the hard knocks of the life before the mast.

What had been my own experiences as a boy that went to prove this statement? Well, that's quite another story, but if you say it's all a part of understanding what comes with the later years, I'll do my

best to recall some of the principal features of it for you.

I was in an orphans' home during the early years of my life and was bound out, long before I can remember, as apprentice to a man who was a combination farmer and shoemaker. He lived in a small country village.

Here in this home my early years were spent as a member of their own family and household. They sent me to school and put me to work very young. One of the first things I remember was the way two of us youngsters used to earn a little pin-money. We fished for rats—actually fished with hook and line. We put the bait on, threw it under the house and then sat down far enough away and well hidden, so that they could come and nibble without fear. Then we jerked and hooked them—and what a tussle there was to get them in! We received five öre—the equivalent of a cent and a quarter—for every big fellow we landed.

Another source of revenue was the candy- and newspaper-stand down at the railway-station. The part of the platform where it stood had cracks half an inch wide. There was only one small opening that allowed entrance to the space below these, and we little shavers used to crawl under and search the ground for the coins that had been dropped and had fallen through. Once I even found a small purse there.

In order to keep the treasure I thus accumulated, I

hid the coins in a little snuff-box in an old stone wall. One unlucky day I dropped it in and couldn't get it out. It is probably there now, waiting for me to come back and claim it.

As I grew older and able to do work for the family, the cobbler set me to cutting the pegs with which he fastened the soles on the shoes. I used to saw a piece off the end of a birch timber, just thick enough to equal the length of the pegs. Then with a long knife I split it into strips, worked these down carefully to the exact thickness of the pegs, beveled and sharpened them and then cut them up into the little wooden nails. Once made, these were put into a big metal tray and dried.

No, all the shoes were not made this way. Many had soles of wood. These we used to protect with pieces of leather on the ball of the foot and on the heel, to keep the wood from wearing away in these spots. Then there were the real wooden shoes, like the French sabots, which we also made. A customer would come, have his or her foot measured and a piece of the birch, maple or oak out of which the shoes were to be made cut off to the exact length. Then came the hollowing out of this to correspond exactly to the size of the customer's foot and the graceful shaping of the exterior to maintain our reputation for a particular style or form. It was a very delicate task, this fitting of the foot with a wooden casing that would not rub or injure it. Some of the farmers even made their own

sabots during the long winter evenings, but there was just as much care shown by the fastidious in picking their sabot-maker in those days as there is in choosing your tailor today.

As I progressed, I supplemented my peg-making with repair-work on the wooden soles and nailing the leather uppers on the clogs. Our master was clever and turned out very good work. In those days there were no factory-made shoes at all, so that everyone had to have his foot-gear made to order.

At what cost? Oh, twelve to fourteen kroner (roughly three to three and a half dollars) for all-leather high shoes and then an extra fifty öre for something not so highly priced in this day—the *knerk*, or squeak we put in them. This we did by inserting between the layers of sole under the instep two pieces of the thin outer bark of the white birch or of a certain kind of harshly finished leather. These rubbed together and made a fine loud squeak, which was highly prized at that time.

I must have been a hard nut for the patient, bent old cobbler to crack; for many a time he would take the double strap which he used to hold the shoe in place on his knee and give me a hiding—if he could catch me among the great, heavy pieces of furniture in that immense room.

It was one of those combination living-rooms and workshops common to the old countries. There was the kitchen stove, the dining-table, a great stove for

heat in the center, the cobbling shop under the window at one end, heavy benches and a great bed, made more like the davenport of today. This let down into the room when bedtime came around. In it two of us children used to sleep, the other a niece or some relative of the mother who was much older than I. The farmer and his wife, with the rest of the children, slept in an inner room.

As I think back to those days, I remember also another great common room which I once saw at Sangis, the port of Haparanda. This was all of forty feet long, about twenty-five wide and had only one door. Just inside the entrance was a great fireplace and beyond this the extraordinary bed which made the room stand out in my memory. For this was so large that about twenty people could sleep in it in two rows, with their heads toward the center. It was really an immense wooden frame on which was spread loose straw and over this burlap and canvas bags. There were plenty of blankets and covers for the whole company that occupied it. These were the men and women who worked as stevedores on the ships that loaded lumber in the port during the summer months. In the winter they moved, by families, into the forest and felled the timber that came down to make up the summer cargoes. They were practically illiterate and lived a rough happy-go-lucky life, though a far from easy one.

As I grew up in these surroundings and became old enough to work outside, they set me to learn the first

tasks about the farm, for their occupation changed with the seasons. I can't remember how small I was when I started to work in the hay-field and elsewhere, but I do recall distinctly my difficulty in the winter task they gave me for the early morning hours before I went to school.

We lived very near a lake from which the shoemaker took fish in the winter to sell to a neighboring dealer. They routed me out at about four or five in the morning and made me go the rounds of the lines before I was allowed to start for school. It was a cold job, you may be sure, as we frequently saw the thermometer down to between ten and twenty-five degrees below zero Fahrenheit. We had holes cut in the thick ice and laid across these a strong stick about a yard long, round which the line was wound.

Bait? Let me see. No, it wasn't bait we used—fishworms, that was it. Yes, it was fishworms, in spite of all you may insist to the contrary; for we dug them under the manure-pile in the barnyard—great big, black ones—and always baited with them.

The holes would be frozen over in the mornings, so that I had to chop them out each day. A big fish was "no catch" for me those days, for most of them were much bigger than I wanted. I was still a shaver —I remember it well—when I used to haul on those lines and sometimes had trouble getting the monstrous, wriggling things up through the hole and out on the ice. I lost dozens of them, but never felt very

sorry over that, as there were always enough left to give me heavy loads for my sled. The two chief varieties were *gös* and *gädda*, that is bass and pike, and ran from ten to twenty pounds.

Yes, we did use tip-ups such as you describe, but only for smaller fish. We made them out of a forked piece, which we set up and froze into the ice, and a line-stick. This latter we laid with the heavier end back of the crotch in the fork and tied the line to the lighter end over the hole. The winding of the line made a knob or shoulder on the stick that prevented it from going through the crotch.

By the time the end of winter came, we often had ice from five to eight feet thick on the lake. One of our greatest sports as boys was to go with the men who were cutting and ride on big cakes which were sawed off and were floating toward the ice-house runway.

As the years passed, they put me to the more difficult work of the farm. I remember well that I was so small, when they taught me to plough, that I could not reach the handles to hold them in the ordinary way but had to grasp them from below. Naturally I was badly thrown about at first, but I managed to learn and ploughed many acres of ground in this manner. That gives you some idea of how we happened to be fully developed by the time we were sixteen.

During the school years one misfortune cost me a

severe disciplining. The teachers in those days used frequently to take the smaller boys and girls across their knee and give them a good paddling. The young woman in our little village school was indulging in this treatment of me, when I kicked too vigorously in protest—naturally with my face to the floor, so that I could not be accused of evil intent—and knocked out two of her teeth. This closed my record in that institution, and I was immediately transferred to another some two miles away, where a man doled out the discipline.

It wasn't long before some prank of a friend and myself forced upon us the humiliating necessity of going to cut our own switches. In response we brought in as big a birch tree as we could carry! Of course, there was additional discipline for that effrontery, but I don't happen to recall the form it took. All through these school days I had one item on the right side of the account—that was that I was never behind in my studies, no matter how little I was in attendance. I managed to keep abreast of my companions and had a good grounding in the elementary subjects.

All this time I was developing a deep affection for my foster-mother, who was a truly lovely, saintly woman. One day she fell ill and was taken to the hospital. I never saw her again. That led to a change in my life. I was returned to the orphans' home and shortly afterward sent with another boy, Iver Anderson, to the island of Oeland in the Baltic, where we

were placed on a farm at Bettorp, *nora* Meckleby, Runsdena Soken, to work there during the summer months. I must have been about twelve at that time. They fed us so badly and worked us so hard that toward autumn the two of us ran away. We took our small bundles on sticks and slipped out one night, walking until the next evening and feeding on the turnips in the fields. All the servants were leaving the farmer at the same time, as he fed them so poorly that they would not come back another season.

On the edge of the town there were free stables for the country people who drove in to market. We entered one of these in the evening and found a cosy place up in the haymow. A little later a farmer came in, put his horse in the stall just below where we lay and then, being evidently on very good terms with his animal, lay down beside him in the stall. I laugh now, when I think for the first time in many years of what happened in the morning. As soon as it was light, I woke and rolled over—and down into the stall, landing square on top of the frightened farmer. That started the day a bit too lively for us, so we bolted for the ferry to the mainland.

At Lanskruna we found a coaster that was going to Stockholm and went boldly on board. When the man came round for the tickets, we told him frankly our plight and were treated very kindly. Iver didn't say much, but I already showed that I could talk myself through a difficulty. They were more amused

than severe with us and set us to work peeling potatoes and helping wash dishes in the galley.

Back at the home in Stockholm we received a good licking. In protest of this treatment we ran away. That escapade did not avail us much, for we were hailed on a bridge we were crossing by a watchman who seemed bent on catching up with us. We took to our heels and started down a very steep, long embankment covered entirely with smooth green turf. We had to go gingerly for fear of tumbling headlong. What do you think that fellow did to get ahead of us? He rolled down! True as I live, he did, and I am not telling you any sailor's yarn now. He beat us to the bottom and arrested us! Turned over to the police, we next found ourselves in the station for the night. But they took us out to a wonderful restaurant across the street, one such as I had never been in before, and gave us a good meal. In the morning we were led back to the home and heard our doom pronounced.

For this second offence we were to be shown what discipline meant and were bound out to a chimney-sweep to work in his sooty trade. For the life of me I can't remember the man's name, though I do recall the exact address—Mestersamelsgaten 24.

Although it spelled little to us at the time, we were now in for one of the most rigorous bits of training any lad could find the world around. At three or four in the morning we were routed out and sent naked into the room where our sweep-uniforms were ready,

for us to put on. These consisted simply of a white shirt of unbleached muslin, white pants with leather patches on the knees and half way up the front of the legs as well as over the whole of the seat, white canvas leggings, shoes, no stockings and a long, bag-like cap. This last we wore neatly rolled up as an ordinary round skull-cap, when we went to our work, and pulled it down over our head and face on entering a chimney. The shoes served only for the street, as we had to go barefooted on the roofs, no matter what the temperature or the amount of snow. We had also heavy overcoats to keep us warm when not actually at work.

We carried a small rake over one shoulder and a brush under the arm. Most of our work was in the many apartment houses in the city, where the chimneys usually had openings at the bottom for us to come out of. Most of these flues were about sixteen inches square. I used to enter at the top, with my back jammed into one corner and my knees pressed into the other two at either side. Then, with my body thus touching all four sides and with my rake and brush whirling, I would drop down as fast as I dared and come out at the bottom as sooty as anything could be.

There was always a man with each team of two boys. He went through the house to warn people that the boys were going down the chimneys and to bank or draw the fires. After I was well broken in to the

work, I did not hesitate to go through a chimney with four or five active flues leading into it. Once my clothes caught fire and came close to giving me a bad burning. That was the reason for the scanty uniform we wore. Heavier clothes, once in flames, would have furnished fuel enough to burn us badly.

On one occasion I had an even more serious time of it, when I dropped down through a chimney which I should have gone up instead. At one of the breaks or curves I stuck and could not wriggle myself free. They let down a line from the top, but their pulling did not budge me. I was getting fidgety. So they took the only possible course and dug me out through the wall, much to the disgust of the householder.

With each master-sweep there were generally from six to ten boys besides their four or five men. The masters busied themselves with cleaning the kitchen and porcelain stoves, while we were at work on the chimneys. Sometimes the flues were not big enough for a boy to go through, so that the men in the gang had to drop a line with a heavy iron ball and circular swirling brushes on it, which they pulled up and down several times. About eight to twelve chimneys was a morning's work for one boy.

We always tried to clean as many as we could, because the householders invariably gave us a fee of twenty-five öre, or about six cents, for every one we did. As we had no pockets in our clothes, we used to cut slits in the double bands in the front of our shirts

and drop the coins in there. Then the men grew wise to our trick and would come along and feel of our shirt fronts, demanding a *bella,* or a part of our takings for the day. So we next learned to stick most of the coins up hard against the gums within the circle of our upper teeth and suck them so hard into place that they would not fall. They never caught us at this while I was with the crowd. The men were hard on us, if we gave them nothing at all, so that we learned to show them only a part of our earnings and to gauge our fees to them by these.

When our morning's work was done, we could go home at about ten or eleven and were never sent back to work until around four in the afternoon. Then we did not get off until eight. This habit of working such unusual hours was not the only one peculiar to the craft, as the sweeps had a language entirely their own. Fighting was also a fixed habit with us. In the mornings and evenings when we changed our clothes in the soot-room, there were some lively cock-fights and even more serious affairs.

After a number of months with this first master, I was shifted to work for a woman who had a business in Oestermalm, just across from the Grand Hotel on Floregaten, the finest residence section of Stockholm.

One of the most memorable experiences in this new place came one winter morning, when I had to go up on a roof with about a foot of snow on it. Just as I

stepped out of the trap-door, I fell and slithered all the way down to the gutter and could not get back up. I shouted, but no one was in the street to hear me. Only when the boss of the gang counted noses to go home did they miss me and come to throw a line and drag me up again. I had sat long in the snow, bare-footed and with no clothes on except my thin shirt. I had about decided to jump the five stories down into a big pile of snow, when my boss turned up for me.

There was one feature of the work in this quarter that I always liked immensely. In the apartment houses the chimneys had, as I told you just now, openings at the bottom for our exit. But in the old style houses there were individual chimneys to each kitchen, where the families always gathered round to see the little "nigger" come out. They invariably laughed at me and often gave me sweets or an unusually liberal fee.

Among other clients in this quarter, I "cleaned" for the Turkish Minister, who always gave me a whole crown. There were many other notables in the neighborhood. At one time I could have told you the names of half the landlords of that part of the town. I even came later to be what you might call "Chimney-Sweep to Royalty," as I slid the chimneys of Prince Karl, the father of Princess Astrid, the bride of the Crown Prince of Belgium.

CHAPTER II

Learning the Lanes of the Sea

IN the winter months we did not work after dusk fell at about four o'clock and were sent to school during these evening hours. I was now nearing the age to be confirmed. It was our Swedish custom for boys and girls who were approaching confirmation to go to the minister for instruction for about three months before Easter, which was the season for this Sacrament. During and just after this period life became so rough and our treatment so severe that I finally made up my mind to run away to sea, where I should be out of reach of all this and be my own master.

So one day I sneaked away with my little bundle and went furtively along the waterfront in search of a craft. Perhaps you have been in Stockholm and know the Grand Hotel, so famous among travelers the world over for its wonderful cooking and its covered-garden dining-room. I knew it from another angle, as I had slithered down its every chimney. Well, over against the pier across the narrow bit of water opposite it lay a small brig loaded with iron ore and carrying the name of *Emil*. I wandered around and eyed her a bit, before taking my courage in my hand and going aboard.

Yes, the captain needed a cook and thought I looked a likely enough one. So I was "at sea"—and my foot was actually set upon the road that led to walking my own deck as master of a gallant, brawny crew. There was no great discussion of terms or duties. I was just to start work at once. The *Emil*, of not over a hundred or a hundred-fifty tons burden, was bound for Gefle and counted as the crew the captain, one A.B. and myself as cook—not what you would call "overmanned."

The first day out I cleaned up after the noon meal, washed my dishes and set the plates all neatly in a row in their rack. Then I threw the dish-water overboard, but, as ill luck would have it, forgot to take the knives and forks out before doing so. That necessitated using jack-knives the rest of the voyage and did not help my standing as head of the galley.

We were no more than nicely under way, just coming out of the harbor, when something looked wrong to the captain and sent him nosing into the hold. He was back on deck in an instant, hurried to the wheel and headed her around to make for a strip of the shore that was free from rocks. We dropped the sails and gently beached her before she had settled down very much. Without a moment's hesitation—no more than was necessary to make her fast—the captain gave me a shovel and ordered me to go ashore with him. He had two big sacks and immediately began a rapid search in the neighboring wood for—ant-hills! While

he held the sacks open, I shoveled in ant colonies and all their architecture until we had two big bagfuls.

Once we had toted these down to the shore, a strange bit of naval repair-work got under way. He produced from below-decks a solid, small canvas bag mounted on an iron ring at the end of a pole, much like a butterfly net. This he filled with the teeming ants and their crumbled houses, waded out to the point where he thought the leak was located, swept the bag of ants along underneath the hull and then turned it in such a way as to release its contents up against the opening seams. In this manner he treated the whole section of the hull which he thought defective. Then we threw the tools and sacks on board, carried the light anchor back to its place and manned the pumps. Though these were little better than the kitchen-sink type, we managed to pump her fairly dry and float her off. Though I was as surprised as you may be at this method of stopping a leak in a seagoing craft, I found out afterwards that it was quite a common thing among our Swedish fishermen and sailors, who considered it entirely adequate for temporary use in quiet water but hardly suitable for heavy weather.

Just as we were coming into the strait of Aland Haf, we suddenly discovered that the craft had sprung another leak. When all hands were ordered to man the pumps, I felt I was getting all the experiences of the sea on the very first voyage. Would we founder?

It looked for a time as though we might, as the moment we ceased pumping, the water gained on us so rapidly that it would soon have had the better of us. The captain grew very nervous and sang a monotonous chantey all the night through, which ran:

"Pump, boys, pump!
I'll give you bread and butter!"

While he stood at the wheel and steered her, we remained at the pumps for fourteen hours straight, until we finally brought her alongside the dock at Gefle. There she sank before they could unload her. My own voyage ended in similar disaster, as the police had been notified of my running away and had somehow found out that I was on board the *Emil.* They telegraphed ahead of us and had someone there to meet me and take me back to Stockholm.

But they did not keep me there long, as I soon made my second and more successful attempt to get to sea on the brig *Öre,* about which I have just told you.

When the judge in the court at Sangis, the port of Haparanda, ordered the captain of the *Öre* to pay us in full, I had a substantial sum of money in my pocket for the first time in my life and was now a real sailor. As there were no craft in the harbor looking for crews, I made my way to the big lumber-port of Sundsvall, which in those days was nothing but a great collection of wooden shacks, frame-houses and lumber-yards but

which is now the third or fourth city in Sweden. It was in 1887 or 1888, I believe, that the great fire came and burned the whole town to the ground. After that it was rebuilt on modern lines and is now one of most progressive of Swedish ports.

Loading there at the time I made my round of the docks was the *Familion.* Imitating as closely as I could the gait and roll of the swaggering men who were now my ideals and teachers, I got into conversation with a group of her crew and learned that she had all the hands that were required. They told me that she was a hard ship to get a berth on, as the captain treated everyone so well that his crews stayed by him voyage after voyage. She was a beautiful ship, a three-masted full-rigger of very large tonnage and just the kind of craft on which I would learn all the duties and arts of the sailor. I wanted mightily to get on board her and be able to go ashore with her crew as one of them. They were a fine lot of men, sturdy and bluff, just the type I longed to be. And I knew that I could lick some of them, if necessary, just to show that I was not a greenhorn and could make a place for myself in the fo'castle, once I could get into the Captain's good graces.

So up the gangway I went, determined somehow to find a berth on the imposing ship. No, there was no place for me in the galley nor as an A.B., because of my lack of experience. But couldn't he take me just as a common seaman? I told him I could climb any-

thing after my experiences on the roofs and in the chimneys of Stockholm. He grew interested in my story, when he found I had been a sweep, and in the yarns I had to tell him of my earlier days on the farms.

"Oh, well, come along! We'll sign you on as an ordinary seaman and teach you how to climb a mast instead of a chimney!"

That was enough. I was actually a member of a crew on a great sea-going ship, bound for South Africa! No lad could begin his real life before the mast under better circumstances. And the captain, too —he was a thorough gentleman in every respect, a religious, God-fearing man and like a father to us all. That was the word I had of him. I shouldn't have to fight him and the mates, as I did on the *Öre*, nor defend myself and my companions in court against his false charges. With such a good berth secured, it did not take me long to learn to strut about the wharves with the old hands during the day or two we remained at Sundsvall.

She was loading lumber and matches for the Cape Colony and other ports further along the southeastern shore of Africa. You know that only the best ships which are registered as number one craft can take matches in their cargo, so that in itself was another point in her favor.

The crew was a large one and counted several apprentices besides myself. Some of these I found pretty

tough. It was not long before rivalry and the usual petty disagreements of the fo'castle brought fists into play and began measuring us off in our respective places. There was always the feeling that you couldn't afford to be the easiest one to lick and consequently get all the kicking about and the nasty jobs to do. But in this ship there was an even greater incentive to prowess, for the captain had his daughter on board. He used to take us youngsters aside and give us a good, sharp talking to about our fisticuffs; but that made little impression as compared to the desire to be a hero in the eyes of that daughter of his. She heard about the scraps, if she didn't see them all, and she knew who was fighting his way up toward the top of the string. Fortunately we didn't have any disagreements with the mates or the captain which required fists to settle, so that our fights on this ship were rather of the ring-type and gave some of us youngsters fine training for the more serious battles that were to come in later voyages.

But we all lost out in the end, so far as the favor of the daughter went; for the second mate, who was a big, husky fellow of twenty-eight or thirty and an officer, just walked off with the prize and married the girl before the voyage ended. There was many a head got an extra crack or a good bit of pounding just for her and the chance of her favor, and then it all had to go for nothing. We were learning the ways of both the sea and of life.

Our voyage was a successful and, consequently, a fairly uneventful one, save of course for those of us who were making our first trip to southern waters and had to meet the sailors' barber on crossing the line. I had a good deal of attention at Neptune's hands and probably deserved it all.

About the only diversion that may have been unusual enough to warrant a place in this belated log of mine was fishing for albatross with hook and line. We used to throw bait out off the quarter and let it trail astern. When one of the birds swooped down for it, we snubbed, just as you would a fish, and brought our quarry in. The chief reason for taking the birds was to make pipe-stems out of their legs.

But what counted most for me on that voyage had nothing unusual in it to tell about. I was getting a training in every branch of seamanship that a fine, first-class vessel like the *Familion* could give. Big and heavy as I was, they sent me aloft with the other boys, something that I did not mind in the least. Good weather followed us throughout most of the voyage, so that we had only to shorten sail a few times. When we did, I was sent to the royal and came to feel quite at home that close to heaven.

You probably know that all well-equipped ships have two suits of sails, the outfit of newer and stronger ones which are set for the stormier weather and heavier winds of the temperate zones and the other older set for the lighter weather of the tropics. When

we were shifting canvas both north and south of the equator, I had plenty of opportunity to go aloft and learn all the tricks of bending sail that were necessary for an A.B. But the years taught me that I had left much unlearned during that first voyage, though I did not take this view of it at the time. My ability to go aloft in any weather and to climb rapidly and surely won the favor of the "old man" and led him to show me many things that the other youngsters were not taught.

Our first harbor was Port Elizabeth, which we reached just two or three days before Christmas. Now it is a peculiar characteristic of this port that you have to attach a hemp rope to your anchor instead of the ordinary iron chain. This is due to the fact that when a certain wind strikes Algoa Bay, it comes so suddenly and so strong that you have very little time to up anchor and get outside to avoid the danger of dragging and being blown ashore. In the past so many anchors have had to be slipped that the bottom is fairly littered with them. This led to the port regulations requiring the manila rope, which you can cut, when necessary, and thus save your ship from real danger.

Christmas Eve we were invited to go on board another Scandinavian craft that lay in port and had a jolly time with the accordion and dancing. The fun was running high along toward three or four in the morning, when orders came to report back at once to

the *Familion*, as the storm signals had been run up. We stood by all the morning and finally had to trip the anchor that afternoon and make for the open sea. There we cruised back and forth for nearly two weeks before the captain felt it safe to re-enter the harbor.

After discharging what cargo we had for Port Elizabeth, we put out again and ran along the coast to East London, where I first put foot on the African soil that was to come to mean so much to me in later years. We had not been allowed on shore at Port Elizabeth, so that it was at this second stop on the coast that I began my African life. How new and strange it all was, yet to a sailor but a part of the life he must expect to meet without showing any signs of being surprised or taken off his guard. Would there be more fights than in the ports of the northern countries? Would there be underhanded natives to watch out for? What would the food and drink be like?

I never cared much for the rum and grog of the sailors of those days, so that I was practically always the soberest one in the crowd, a fact that stood me in good stead many a time, when pushed into a tight corner. This also gave me a little different standing with the men whom I met and perhaps created in them an impression of my having a little more self-control than the average lad of my years showed.

It may have accounted for the proposal made to me by some Norwegians to join them in an elephant-hunting expedition in German East Africa. They

were going for ivory and made me a good offer. I became so enthused with their stories and their promises that I began at once planning to get away from the ship. The only thing that occurred to me was to feign one of the strange illnesses with which the country was filled, so I had all the symptoms I could think of and was taken to the doctor for examination. He did not seem to find much the matter with me—and, as I look back on that illness in comparison with some of those I had later in these same parts, I do not wonder. I was probably as healthy and husky a specimen as had ever come under his—what is the name of that thing the doctor puts on your chest? That's it, I never could even pronounce it, but spell it out for me and it will be all right.

The captain, however, yielded at last and left me there in the hospital—and it was thus, in a dishonest way that has always bothered me, that I forsook one of the best ships and best masters that ever sailed the seas. What was worse, as I "recovered" from my first African illness, my enthusiasm for the elephant-hunt cooled and left me merely a stranded A.B. looking for a ship. I began making the rounds of all the steamers and sailing-vessels that came into port, ready to accept anything that would take me to sea again in a capacity which seemed reasonable.

Finally a steamer came in, the *Balkares Brock*, as nearly as I can recall her name, with a sick third engineer. When I boarded her and asked the usual ques-

tion, the captain said he would sign me on if I could do the work. Modesty as to my ability to do anything around machinery never stood in my way of getting a post. So the next entry in my private log was that of oiler and third engineer on board the *Balkares Brock*, bound for India, the Orient and all the Eastern seas.

When you take a real, honest-to-goodness skysail sailor-lad and put him in steam, it's bad enough; but when you go one step farther and bury him in the bowels of the ship, you take all the excitement out of life for him, save when he is in port. So these long months in the engine-room became just a school for me to learn enough about machinery to be the mainstay of my later life experiences, though I did not feel at all enthused or excited about the matter then. The chance to get up on deck in the sweltering heat of the Indian Ocean and occasional shore-leave were the only things that counted in those days.

I remember one bit of work, however, which was done on board that gave me a real change from the monotony of wiping bearings and listening to the steady throb of the engines. It was in the Bay of Bengal, when we were just out of either Calicut or Cochin, that a terrific storm hit us and carried away our rudder. We floundered about until the worst of the wind went down and then set to on the task of rigging a substitute. First the captain ordered all hands out to carry the rice, which made up our cargo,

from the after hold to the forward deck. It took a real man to back those bags continuously for hours, and I found the training of my years at hard work and the short time in sail beginning to tell for me against the steam-men.

When we had shifted enough of the cargo to put the bow down and lift the stern clear of the water, the captain and officers rigged a rudder out of timbers and spare booms in a most ingenious way, especially when it came to making fast the rudder-chains. If you have any idea of the force of waves, you know what it must mean to lash together spare parts in such a manner that they will take the force of the water and the side pressure made by the way and steering of the ship at the same time.

The moment the captain nodded approval of the job, all hands turned to again to shift the cargo back into the after hold. Then we started the engines in a gingerly manner and watched the dials for orders. Would the makeshift steering-gear hold until we could get into port? It almost did, but not quite. The timbers gave way just as we were approaching Ceylon, where we had to be towed into harbor.

That meant longer shore-leave and a chance to liven up a bit, but that is an old story the world around. Jack ashore is very little different in any clime. During the long months of cruising from port to port as a tramp under charter to a British firm, we learned to know the tea-houses of Malay Street in Singapore,

climbed the Peak at Hong Kong and visited the theater street in Shanghai, where we heard the weirdest, wildest music and saw the fanciest costumes in the shows that the sailor's world can boast of. Later we skirted the Korean shores and went north to Vladivostok, where we saw the Koreans with their untrimmed hats and the Russians with their untrimmed beards, each about equally curious to most of us, though I had seen something of the Finn in northern Sweden to give me a similar figure.

Then we loaded rice somewhere in the south and sailed all the long way around the northeast passage through the Behring Sea to Archangel. Yes, on my word of honor we did, though I am unable to tell you about the many things that would have attracted me if I had been before the mast on a sailing-vessel, where I could have marked the characteristics of the seas and the shores.

During these long runs the chief engineer was beginning to take an interest in me and finally lent me his books and helped me to study more thoroughly both the technical matters needed for his work and the English language. The long and rather eventless voyage had at least netted me something and given me funds enough to go back to Stockholm and see what relatives and friends I had, now that I was a full-fledged son of the sea, free and independent.

CHAPTER III

A Lesson in Swimming

THIS must have been in 1888. Late in the autumn I decided to go to Hamburg to look for another ship and there took a room in an establishment kept by "Swedish Mamma" at Hofenstrasse 5, Altoona. Now you may not know the custom of the sailors in those days to go to certain boarding-houses, which were a sort of combination home and agency. The proprietors were well known to all the ship captains, who used to make the rounds of these establishments whenever they wanted crews. The men went there to live with the understanding that they would be boarded free until they got a ship, when they must settle for the length of their stay and give their first month's pay as an agency fee.

I had heard of Swedish Mamma as a good woman, who took a great interest in the Scandinavian sailors, and so immediately looked her up. The very first day I was there she introduced me to a bright little girl, who proposed that we go that evening to a theater. I liked her so well and felt so unwilling to prove a poor sport the first shot out of the box that I went out and pawned my watch to get money enough to pay

for our evening's gaiety, as I had come back from Sweden strapped.

But even with so attractive a friend to help me to spend all the money I was going to earn on my next voyage, I was never satisfied to lie around the boarding-houses and wait for the captains to come and look up men. I went out on my own and combed the harbor.

My eye had no more than lighted on a full-rigged four-master before I knew that she was the one I wanted, if I could possibly find an empty berth on board her. She was the *Torrance Stephens* of Londonderry, an iron sailing-vessel. When I went aboard and asked for a place, the captain answered:

"Yes, lad, I want to sign on a crew. We are sailing at once to England to load coal." He gave me the job of cook and steward and told me that, though he was not quite ready to take on the others, I could come aboard and begin my work.

When I returned and told Swedish Mamma of my good luck, she strongly protested that that ship was no craft for me and warned me against sailing in her. She was so definite in her opposition that I had to steal my clothes out of the house and sneak along the side streets to the wharf for fear she would have some one on my trail.

It was the following or the second day that the captain took on a crew for the run only, as the wages in the English ports were on a lower scale than those

of Hamburg and he was evidently counting on getting his hands for less there. All of them were grown men, save one Swedish boy, Axel Anderson by name, with whom I soon became very friendly. The crew had not been on board two hours before they assembled and demanded to see the captain. They filed with him a complaint that, to their knowledge as experienced seamen, the ship did not have enough ballast in the hold to cross the North Sea without great risk. The captain answered that he had sailed the *Torrance Stephens* for many voyages and knew her stiffness well in all weather. The discussion only resulted in a sharp calling down for some of the men and their prompt desertion. The captain had to go ashore and fill their places before we could slip our lines. The affair left a bad feeling with all of us, one that no one could quite put his finger on but that bothered us all. The moment the new men came on board, the captain had the tugboat ready to tow us out immediately.

What the older men who had left the ship said about her shortage of ballast preyed a bit on my mind and did not help my mood when the captain reprimanded me for feeding the crew some of the supplies that should have been saved for the cabin. It was the first or second night out—I don't remember which—when this happened and I talked to Axel Anderson about the whole affair. He only made a jest of it and boasted:

"If we have to take to the water, I am a good

swimmer and can swim to shore. You and I can go along together."

That night I went to bed early and dreamed that the ship had capsized. The dream was so real that I jumped square out of bed and found myself standing bolt upright with my heart beating enough for me to hear it pound. I was so scared that I did not feel comfortable about going back to bed. Consequently I dressed, put on a new souwester I had bought and went on deck. The first mate had the watch. I sat down beside him to talk.

The sea was almost a dead calm, so that the ship was hardly moving. The night was dark as black cats.

"Look!" I called to the mate, "did you see that?" as I pointed to a streak of light in the sky. He had not and chaffed me for my fear. Then it came again. The ship had her yards braced up and was sailing by the wind. Quicker than chain lightning a gust swept over the sea. The mate rushed below to warn the captain, who shouted all hands on deck. He gave one order, but it was not executed before the wind hit us like a cannon shot and heeled the ship way over on her side until the masts struck the water.

The men shouted and cursed, though little good it did, as they could not be heard beyond the reach of their own arms. The captain's wife and little girl were in the cabin below. I was still on the poop, where I had been talking with the mate when I first spied the

light in the sky. Seeing the blast coming over the water, I had time to make for the rail, with the memory of my vivid dream driving me to action that I should never have otherwise thought of. I grabbed the end of a line just as the first of the wind came on and so was able to keep my footing on the sloping deck and get to the rail when she capsized.

It all happened so quickly, and the wind so took away one's powers of anything but involuntary action, that I cannot say really what did occur in those short moments between the time the mate left me and I found myself falling. When the ship went over, I was thrown into the water but managed to swim back to the now perpendicular poop and climb up on the outboard side of the rail by some rigging-ropes that dangled. Then I worked my way along the hull toward the stern in anticipation of the final downward thrust of the masts, when she should go bottom up. If she had turned turtle at once, I should never have seen the daylight, as I should have been caught under her. With the hatches tightly battened down, she did not take much water during the short interval she remained on her side. This left her with a large cushion of air inside the hull to keep her afloat.

From my seat on the poop I had watched the hurricane break, yet it came so quickly that I hardly realized it myself, until the crashing blow struck us. If she had not been going by the wind or could have been brought round, she would probably not have capsized.

She heeled over to port, so that we were on the starboard rail.

The young Swede happened to be at the wheel, also in an oilskin suit, when the blow came. While the masts and sails still lay on the water, he scrambled up and joined me and crawled along outside the rail with me toward the stern. Then the masts started to sag and sank slowly under, turning her completely bottom up as they went.

The captain and officers with those who happened to be near them tried to clear a boat but failed. In the dark and with the terrible wind it was every man for himself and God for us all. Instead of dropping after the first blast, the gale increased in fury and soon beat up a nasty, running sea. Twice I was pounded off into the water and had really to fight for dear life in order to get back again.

Anderson was torn off by the same waves that dislodged me. Then, when we were both on the rudder-chains once more, he took off his oilskin coat and threw it away to give him freer movement, if he should have to swim again. I grabbed it, however, before it was swept away. A sudden idea had come to me that we take our oilskins, tear them into strong strips, twist them and use them to lash ourselves to the eye-bolts, where the rudder-chain was fastened. It was a slow and tedious job, as we had to keep our place and work at the same time, when the mere act of holding on was enough to require all our strength

and head. But somehow we finally managed to wrap one, then a second strip of the twisted oilskin around the two of us and through the eye-bolt for the tie. That done, Anderson wriggled out of his trousers, which we used in the same way to strengthen our other fastenings.

Again and again, as we struggled against the beating of the waves, we thought we were gone, but each time the last ounce of strength seemed just enough to cheat the sea of its prey. As long as we were conscious, we could manage to keep our grasp until some extra big wave came, when it was only our lashings that saved us from being swept off. There was no one within ten or fifteen feet of us, as it was impossible for any of the others to make their way along the curving lines of the stern. We could hear them calling from time to time, as the fury of the wind died down. There were shouts for help, when a wave took one or more of them off the keel; then cries from the water, followed sometimes by lower words of thanks to their mates for dragging them back up the slippery hull—and at other times by the silence which told the rest of us the way that we ourselves should probably soon go.

How the night ever passed I hardly know. I cannot now remember out of all the long hours any definite thing or thought, save the cries and cursings of the others and our own occasional exchanges of connected words. There were outbursts of rage at that beast of a captain, whose pigheadedness and conceit had jeop-

ardized our lives. And where were his wife and child now? There, under the very plate on which he lay, perhaps; but they were doomed—suffocated by now or soon to be! God, what a tragedy! Think of lying there on the outside of that hull and knowing that the two beings closest to you in all the millions of the world were just below you, awaiting their death, and you, perhaps, fated to live on with the realization that it was your stupidity that killed them.

But another took this matter and this problem out of his hands. When the light began to seep up over the eastern horizon enough for us to make out their forms, we could see that about half the crew of twenty were still on the hull, including ourselves. I was surprised that any were left at all. The captain was there, lying across the keel and hanging on as best he could.

Then, when the light came full and we could watch the whole thing clearly, one of the German sailors in the crew rose from the place where he lay, at the risk of his own life walked along the keel to the captain and, with a terrible oath of accusation, kicked the man full in the face until he relaxed his grasp and slid into the sea. As he tried to make his way back to a place of safety, the German watched his chance like a wild beast, swore at him:

"Take that, you damned swine!" and booted him off again into the water. A few attacks like this, and he was gone. Not a man of the others tried to help or defend him. They only joined in to say it served

him right or to add a curse of their own to those of his assailant.

And so the man who had caused the loss of all these lives went to join his wife and child, leaving those of his crew who still clung to the upturned hull to fight for the few hours or minutes of life that the relentless sea might grant them. It was a ghastly thing for the German sailor to have done, especially when the common peril should have broken down all hatred and desire for revenge. It was a demonstration of the animal instinct in him that made us all feel sick, in spite of the clear justice we recognized in his act.

I can't remember now just how the morning hours passed and when different members of the crew became too weak to stand longer the pounding of the sea or to swim and climb back, once they were washed off. There was nothing for any of them to hold to except the keel, where the ship began to shape enough to narrow this down toward the bow and stern. I do remember, as I just told you, that none of the others came nearer than ten or fifteen feet, as the hull sloped away so rapidly that no one could very well climb down to the rudder-chains where we were fastened.

We were becoming half conscious through the constant pounding and the cold, for it was November in the North Sea and the storm was out of the north. We kept up our circulation by kicking, so long as we had the strength. The oilskin ropes we had made cut into our sides and bruised us, though this was but

a small detail in those hours of greater pain. We were bound so closely together that we must have helped each other to keep warm or we probably never would have survived the chilling effect of the air and the sea. At the outset Anderson had been brave and had even jested about that swim for the shore which he had been boasting of and which he would soon have to prove he could do. But he said he would keep me company for a while yet. As the hours of the night grew longer and the light seemed to have been blotted out forever, he grew less buoyant and began to moan about his people and some girl he kept calling by name under his breath.

With the light he was worse off than I, as he probably did not have the brute strength of my bigger frame. I thought from time to time that he was slipping into unconsciousness and that I should have to fight hard to stave it off myself and keep my strength to hold us both in position. Constantly I examined the lines and prayed that they would hold, but I did not dare to trust to them entirely, so long as I should be able to relieve them of the strain of all our weight.

When and how the members of the crew finally lost their places on the upturned hull and slid off for the last plunge into the merciless water, I cannot tell, nor how long I fought to keep control of my own strength before the end came. At last, some time during the hours before noon, after I had been exerting the last ounce of strength to help up the limp body

of my companion and take the threatening strain off those improvised ropes around us, I too lost consciousness.

The next thing I knew I was lying in the bunk of a strange vessel, tucked in between warm blankets and decidedly under the influence of the grog I had been given. It was a fishing-trawler, that had happened to run close enough to sight the upturned hull and then came nearer to investigate. We were on the farther side and not seen at first. They were about to steam away, when the captain decided to circle the wreck to see whether anyone was floating near. Rounding the stern, they discovered us hanging in our tightly drawn lines and immediately put off a boat to cut us down. This proved no easy task for them, but, thank fortune, they succeeded—and Anderson and I were saved, the only survivors of that whole crew. They told us it was about one o'clock when they took us off. I came to some time that afternoon. They all thought it was marvelous that we had been saved.

Then we had to go over the whole story for them and listened with a good deal of satisfaction to the oaths they let loose on that captain. I could still see him sprawling over the keel, as the German rose and cautiously made his way along it toward where he lay. That part of the picture will never leave me.

But we were a bit out of our heads that evening and night from both the exhausting effects of the cold and the pounding and from the liquor they gave us to

bring us around. They landed us in Hull and took us at once to a hospital. There, after two or three days, we were fairly normal again and ready to look for another ship—if you can call that being normal. The owners gave us fifty pounds apiece to reimburse us for our kit and paid our hospital bills. I lost all I possessed in the world at the time, including a fine gold watch which I valued very highly. Stripped of everything save the clothes I stood up in and the fifty pounds in my pocket, I took train for Cardiff to look for a ship with cargo enough in her hold to keep her masts pointing in the right direction.

It was the dream alone that saved me. If it had not come, there would not have been one chance in a thousand of either Anderson or myself riding out the storm. I met him years later in Sweden and found that he "still remembered" his little boast about swimming ashore, and the way in which the sea accepted his challenge.

CHAPTER IV

A Sailor's Education

IT was a custom among sailors in the 'eighties to ship out of one special place, whenever practicable, thus making that more or less their home port, even though it might be quite far from their actual homes. This was especially true of us Scandinavians, because there were not enough ships clearing from our harbors to give employment to all the men who were going to sea. Some of us, for one reason or another, took Hamburg, others English ports. We were influenced very often by the treatment we happened to receive the first time we signed on from a port and were drawn back to it as a fair place to deal.

But probably the greatest factor in fixing our customary place of sailing was the character of the boarding-house. This was certainly the reason why I became a "Cardiff sailor" during the next few years. On arriving in the town I went to stop in South William Street with a boarding-master whose house was only a few doors from the "Shipping Pilot" on Bute Dock Road, a pub that every sailor knows.

Of course, you may have guessed by now that the boarding-master had a daughter, one that loved a good

time. The old man, too, was exceedingly kind, doing much more for me than anyone I met all these years of my early sea life. I liked the girl and found out before very long that she more than returned my feeling. We went to dances and everywhere together, all under the encouragement and help of her father. Just fresh from my experience on the *Torrance Stephens*, I had plenty to talk about and found the days of waiting for my next ship far from dull ones.

After two weeks of this very pleasant "waiting," I signed on as an A.B. with the captain of the *Yterpe*, a German four-masted barquentine that was bound for the Cape with a cargo of coal. I took leave of my boarding-master and his daughter with great regret, promising to return and ship from Cardiff whenever I was back in this part of the world.

As we came out of harbor, the wind was blowing strong and in our favor. In the neighborhood of the Scilly Islands the breeze freshened to nearly a gale, so that the ship was running more under water than on the surface. For two days we continued like this, taking in one sail after another, until she was practically under bare poles. The wind had increased to hurricane force, and we were driving before it faster than our hand-log could register. The decks were so flooded and the gale so strong that it became impossible to prepare food or to do anything save huddle down in a corner and let her run. When we had to go for our turn at the wheel or to stand

by for orders, we had to pull ourselves back and forth from fo'castle to poop along life-lines and always went in pairs.

Matters had grown so bad for us, with no food possible in the galley and the ship so long drenched with the waves, that we protested against lancing and forced the master to abandon the course on which he was making such handsome returns for himself. The ship was traveling twice as fast as could normally be expected and was coining money for him—if she didn't founder.

The captain was a good seaman and not at all afraid or disturbed when he went to the wheel and gave orders for all of us to stand by to help heave her to. In order to bring her round, it was necessary for one man to go aloft to loose part of the mainsail. The yards were braced fore and aft, and the main sheet hauled aft. Everything was handled fair, and she came up all right. But in bringing her round, he gave her too much helm. With the terrific speed at which the ship was going, his error sent her past the wind. As her head went over, he was powerless in such a gale to help her sufficiently with the wheel and could only stand and see our two foremasts carried away and one of the crew go overboard with them. As we had come up, the force of the wind on the naked masts had been so strong that it bowed them well to leeward. As she passed the wind, they snapped like matches.

We were in a dangerous plight with a hurricane blowing and the masts pounding our side. The captain surrendered the wheel to the boatswain and shouted his orders to chop the rigging clear. That meant more than the simple words imply. We could hardly stand or move with any degree of safety on the deck and had to work our way cautiously along to the fo'castle and below to get knives, axes, hammers, chisels—everything we could lay our hands on to cut away the lines and cables. For hours we worked over what would have been a comparatively short job in a quiet sea. The wind-devils howled through the rigging of the two remaining masts, while the great combers broke over us as we worked by the rail.

After we had finally succeeded in cutting the last piece of rigging the ship lifted two or three feet and rode like a duck in a storm. In this condition we could only set enough canvas on the schooner-rigged mizzenmasts to steady us and thus drifted about, so far as I can recall, for some six or seven days, until a steamer sighted us and towed us back into Cardiff. As it was just before Christmas when we limped into port at the end of our tow-line, I had a warm welcome at the boarding-house, though I can't say as much for the captain's reception by his ship-owners.

It is a firmly established custom all over the world for Scandinavian sailors, no matter where Christmas happens to catch them, to go to the Scandinavian Lutheran Church for the Christmas Eve celebration.

There they will always find a liberal supply of gifts and plenty of good cheer to welcome them. Presents are sent out from every part of Scandinavia to these churches all over the world. Packages may be marked "For the last sailor who has lost his ship," "For the youngest A.B.," "For a blond boy," "For the youngest apprentice," or "For a lad from such-and-such a town." The parcels contained mufflers, sweaters, caps and all sorts of other woolen things and articles of clothing, made by the women all over Norway, Denmark and Sweden. Fortunately for those who follow the sea, these churches have been established in practically every big port where sailing-vessels used to touch. These and the Salvation Army have, during later years, been my religion. In Philadelphia there is one where, when shipping was so bad seven or eight years ago, we were feeding over a hundred stranded sailors and providing them with bedding to sleep on the floor of the church. In the mornings when I went into town to work, I used to pass through a small Swedish colony in the suburbs and always took sacks of potatoes or other food in my automobile with me.

The loss of my last two ships and other bits of "good luck" brought me many of the specially marked parcels. It was a jolly Yule for me after all the pounding I had received on the *Torrance Stephens* and the *Yterpe*. My boarding-master and his daughter gave me more of a home than anything I had ever known since my gentle foster-mother was carried away from

the Swedish village to the hospital. I don't remember now how long the fun on shore kept up or even the name of the next ship which I secured, although I ought, out of courtesy to the hospitality of the captain, hold a much more appreciative place in my memory for her. As I look back over those years at sea, I am surprised to find how many long stretches seem almost blank and how other short intervals are crowded with the most distinct and penetrating memories. I could draw you an exact picture, absolutely to scale, of the keel and the clinging crew of the *Torrance Stephens* and I remember almost every detail in the build and rigging of that first nautical venture, the *Emil.* Yet all I can recall of the whole trip to India is nothing but two incidents to mark this, my second voyage in steam.

The first was the prediction of a fortune-teller who came on board at Rangoon or Calcutta. It was in one of those ports where we did not go alongside the wharf, that much I know. After the native had read all the horoscopes of the crew, the chief mate, a man of only about thirty-five, came along and wanted to hear his.

"I have nothing to tell you," answered the soothsayer, "you have had all your fortune. You are soon going home. You will not be with us long."

The mate, who was a very religious man, called us into his cabin and told us that he knew he was going to die. Although he was apparently in the best of

health at that time, we buried him at sea only a week or two later.

My other memory of this voyage is not so melancholy, even though it is based upon misfortune—that is, to one individual on board. The captain was a mean man and did not feed us properly. Instead of potatoes, he gave us a sort of cheap jam; in place of butter, an inferior quality of oil. In the face of this attempt to keep us on short rations he had the nerve to take on board at Calcutta two hundred fine turkeys, on which he was evidently going to make a handsome profit for himself in the English market. He had a pen rigged up in one of the alleys alongside the engine-hatch and left the birds to the cook to feed and care for during the voyage.

This was too much for our abused palates. Every night one or two of the roosting birds were carefully muffled and taken below to the stoke-hold. There we plucked and prepared them, wrapped them well in damp clay, partially drew one of the fires, which we had purposely let run down very low, and baked our tender morsel in the coals. Never were there so many turkey dinners served at sea before—or since—that trip, I'll warrant! When we reached England there were only twenty-five of the birds left—and we got away before the captain took an inventory of his live stock.

Back in Cardiff again after this epicurean trip, I spent another very pleasant period going about a great

deal with the daughter of my boarding-master, far from anxious about catching another ship. Perhaps it was really Fate that stepped in this time to overcome my willingness to loaf on shore. There was a small brigantine in port called the *Arakan*, that had made for herself a far-from-desirable name. All of us in the boarding-house knew that she was short of hands but not a single man wanted to sail with her, as the captain, a Swede, had a reputation for hanging up members of his crew in chains when he chose to discipline them.

One day a Swede, who had been knocking around with us at the "Shipping Pilot," told us about a countryman of ours who was on board the *Arakan* and suggested that we go off to see him and have a look at this ship with such an evil name. We found her clean as a whistle, freshly painted and tidy in every respect. She had galleys athwartships just forward of the poop on which the life-boats rested. Nosing around under these, I found the marks of the chains where members of the crew had been strung up during previous voyages. Then we were introduced to the captain, a huge man, with red hair and a red beard, a brute of a beast if ever I saw one. The five of us who had come aboard with our "Shipping Pilot" acquaintance were asked if we didn't want to sign on for a voyage into the tropics. When we refused, the captain said he was sorry, because he liked the looks of us boys. But we were having none of him as a boss

and didn't mind saying so to the Swedish member of the crew and our temporary guide. We told them this over a mug of ale which we had in the fo'castle before going ashore—a long time before going ashore, for we had to go to sleep first! That captain was much sharper than we youngsters and shanghaied us good and proper. The ale was doped sufficiently to put us to sleep until the ship had been towed out of harbor and the tug had cast off.

Then they woke us and ordered us on deck to help set the sails. If the tug hadn't been out of reach, I think I should have jumped overboard and swum for it rather than go to sea with that red-headed brute of a master. While we were still dazed from the heavy sleep and the effect of the drug, they shoved and kicked us out of the fo'castle and told us to go aloft with the rest of the crew. But we were five in all and were not yet ready to admit that even the other eight men and three officers could take us to sea against our will. It was the first time I had ever been shanghaied and I wasn't for taking the matter lightly. So we chose to fight, and the scrap was on! We had refused to obey orders, which meant that we had to be punished. We were all about the same age and stuck as close together as possible when they rushed us. Only one sail had been set, and the ship was rolling enough to make it hard for us to keep our footing. At first the officers thought to bring us into line without any help from the crew. The captain imagined

he could alone account for two or three of us, as he was over six feet tall and had a fist like an iron mall. Before the voyage was ended he knocked me stiff with it many times.

The chief mate was small and did not look like much of a fighter, but he proved to be as quick as lightning. He had rubber boots on too, which enabled him to keep his footing, and could have taken care of two inexperienced youngsters like myself if he had only been a bigger man. But it was sheer weight that bore him down. We were getting the best of them, so that they had to call in the crew. That made a battle royal of it, especially as our little group worked close together and came to the rescue of any member that got separated for a moment and was being hard pressed. Whenever we could manage to jump back into a close knot and get above one or two of our opponents on the downward roll of the ship, we would jab them against the rail and pound them unmercifully before the older and heavier men behind us could catch up and save their companions.

As the ship rolled and slid down into the trough of the waves, with not a single man at post save the boatswain at the wheel, we fought back and forth, fore and aft and athwartship, for nearly half an hour. It seemed an age, with the stinging bruises and cuts about our heads and hands. Through our quickness and determination we could handle the other members of the crew and had almost won a chance to force

the captain to put about and land us, when the "law" interfered and polished us off. You know "mutinous sailors" can be subdued with belaying-pins, iron bars or any other weapon in the hands of an officer, whereas the man before the mast has no legal recourse to arms. And so they got us from behind with their clubs, while we were in a fair fight with our fists. Two or three of us were knocked out before we finally gave way and accepted orders.

When the fight was over and we had had a chance to tie up our heads and hands a bit, we demanded an interview with the captain.

"Boys, you set the sails and get the ship going, then I'll talk to you; but not a word before that." So we had no option but to turn round and show what we could do as sailors, by going aloft with the others and helping to set the canvas and get her under way. Then they made up watches, split our little group in two and gave us a hearing with the captain.

"Boys, I couldn't fill my crew and just had to get away. Now you act right, do what is right, and I'll pay you right and treat you right."

We found the ship was bound for some place of which none of us had ever heard and didn't know whether it was a trading-post or a real city. It turned out to be a small hamlet up one of the rivers on the Ivory Coast, somewhere in the Cameroons, so that we were bound for this fever-stricken hole that sailors loathe and had no option but to keep quiet and go.

The Swede who had been used as a bait to entice us on board was an older man, to whom we all took a liking and who encouraged us to steady down and work.

"Boys, you got shanghaied, that's true enough; but you've got to make the best of it. The old man is a brute, but he'll treat you fair if you don't cross him."

He told us how the captain had hung up many of the crew on former voyages and had crippled two of his men in doing it.

But we weren't so docile as the old Swede urged us to be. There was hardly a day went by but what two or three of us who were off duty managed to corner some member of the crew that had joined the officers in subduing us at the offset and gave him a good sound drubbing for the part he had played. Nor did we let the captain lose his respect for us, for we made his life miserable during the whole voyage. He never once during the first few days came on deck without a revolver or a belaying-pin in his hand. He was eventually tried in court in one of the South African ports, but was sent back to Sweden for punishment. Some of the crew deserted, while we were on the Ivory Coast, but most of them returned to Sweden to see that the old man got what was coming to him.

From the very outset of our experience I never could quite understand the matter-of-fact way in which the old Swede in the crew looked upon shang-

haiing. Of course, we had all heard of it before and had laughed over a good many stories told about it; still I couldn't yet see it in the casual way in which he evidently viewed the captain's methods of meeting the necessities of the moment. One night in the fo'-castle the old Swede told us of a particular case where matters did not work out quite as the captain, who was having two or three men shanghaied for him in New York, had calculated. When the recruits for his service came in, one of them turned out to be a priest! As the captain happened also to be a Catholic, it was not very long before "the slight error" was rectified and the father returned to his flock on shore.

Another case that seemed to amuse him hugely was a Cardiff incident. An unfortunate tar who had taken more liquid ballast aboard than was good for his steering-gear fell into Bute Dock one night and was drowned. The boarding-house master was notified, came down and took the body back to his house. It so happened that he had just received a commission from a captain who was clearing port at once to supply him with one more man for his crew. Being either a humorist or having a grudge against the captain, he sent him off a sailor of "proven quality," guaranteed not to wake up before they were out of harbor. The boarding-master thus not only earned his fee for the shanghaiing but saved himself the expenses of a land funeral as well.

Of course, everyone who sailed the seas in those

days knew that the most famous crimp at that time was Shanghai Brown of San Francisco. His name was known wherever fo'castle yarns were told. He was reputed not only to have the longest record of men put aboard windjammers in this manner but also to have gone so far, when he was pressed for one more man than he happened to have within his immediate reach, to have doped and shanghaied his own son. For some little time that was the best story of the sort that sailors could tell, until the boy proved himself "a chip of the old block" and went the senior member of the concern one better by delivering his father unconscious to a captain who had bargained with him for an extra hand. Unfortunately I never heard anyone give a verbatim account of the first interview between father and son, after the former returned from his little excursion before the mast.

But to go back to the story of the *Arakan*—she was under charter to an English company to make the round of the posts in the Cameroons and on the Ivory Coast, taking out a cargo of coal for the single port whose name I have forgotten. The charterers were a big British trading-company that collected ivory, rubber and ebony from this part of Africa for importation into England.

The five of us who had been shanghaied were kept practically prisoners on board throughout the whole trip, except at a single port which was very wild and where there were very few foreigners. There I had a

chat with an Englishman who told me that shanghaiing was a very frequent practice with ships visiting the coast, because the place was so infested with fever and disease that very few sailors could be found who would willingly accept ships that were trading along it. Fortunately only two of us fell ill, and they not seriously, during the whole voyage. We resented so thoroughly being treated as prisoners that we were consequently on the lookout to get even with the cabin and to make their life as miserable as possible. One of the boys dropped a marline-spike on the head of the second mate from far enough up in the rigging for the thing to have gone through him if it had struck him point on. Naturally the heavy end took the lead and only gave him a forceful reminder that we five were still on board. I myself had two or three fights with the second mate and always managed to get the better of him, if no one interfered with a belaying-pin.

With our valuable cargo of Ivory Coast products in our hold we came back into a small English port, not far from Cardiff. We were paid off in full as A.B.'s for a period, I think, of just over three months. I believe the rates at this time were two pounds fifteen shillings to three pounds per month. The captain did not dock us the one month's pay which it was actually the custom in those days to take from the sailors as a fee to the boarding-master for shanghaiing them. I imagine that things had been a bit too rough on

this voyage for even that red-haired brute to stomach lightly, so that what he did was to pay us in full and get us to sign exonerating receipts that robbed us of all chance of lodging any effective complaints before the authorities.

When I reached Cardiff and told my good boarding-master what had happened he laughed and said:

"Oh, you'll have plenty of that before you're through a sailor's life. I thought that was what had happened to you boys!"

CHAPTER V

Cannibals and Yellow Jack

BY this time Cardiff and my sailors' boarding-house, with the pretty lassie of a daughter, were so nearly home to me that I was always loath to leave —that is, at first. But no sailor can stay long on shore, any more than the fish that swim under him can remain long out of water. So I was soon hunting about again for another ship.

There was a steamer in port whose name, as nearly as I can now approximate it, was *Alfang de Coun.* She was the dirtiest I had ever seen, flew the Argentine flag and was manned almost entirely by Spaniards, Italians and Argentineans. But there were not enough of these black-haired southerners offering, so the captain was looking for other men. Moreover, the steamer was bound for Rio de Janeiro, which was then known as the sailors' death-trap because of the fever conditions around the noisome harbor. That was before the place was dredged and while it was still full of malaria and yellow fever. We all knew that her captain had made the rounds of the shipping-offices and boarding-houses without securing his quota. I went on board to look at her and did not wonder that she had not a full crew,

as she was filthy beyond words. Yet in spite of all this something pulled me. I had never been across the Atlantic and wanted to see South America. I decided to chance her. Everything about the boat seemed sinister and foreboding. Also the boys in the boarding-house, when they heard what I was contemplating, tried to scare me with the yarn about the black pill, which they give you in South American hospitals when you are brought in with the fever.

Nothing of all this, however, put me off. I signed on as A. B. together with a German and a Norwegian, thus forming a trio of northerners. I set about at once learning a little of the Spanish in which the commands of the ship were given. Most of the men were Argentineans, whom we found on closer acquaintance to be a fine lot.

We were laden with coal for Rio and took about a month for the voyage. As soon as we had discharged, we carried on southward to Santos, where we loaded coffee and general cargo for the West coast. I was thrilled with the thought of this voyage into new waters.

But it proved more of a thriller than I had counted upon. When we entered the Straits of Magellan the wind was blowing a gale from the west. In the morning, somewhere around six bells, the ship lost her bearings and ran on the rocks to the west of Cape Virgenes. As the giant seas were pounding us, it looked as though we might break up at any moment. The life-

boats were launched and all hands ordered into them, as the ship was taking water fast and settling by the stern. We angled the boats into the wind as best we could, to work toward the shore without being swamped. It was still so dark that the land looked only like distant clouds on the horizon.

On approaching the shore, we had a nasty bit of work when one of the life-boats struck a rock and foundered. The others of us went to the rescue and picked up what we supposed were all of her crew; but we found when we at last reached the shore, an hour and a half after we had abandoned ship, that two of the men were missing. It was quite the roughest bit of work in open boats that I have ever seen and it was also the closest I ever came to getting round the Horn. I don't remember now just what time of the year it was but I think it must have been well toward winter, sometime in June, as it was terribly cold.

Naturally, as you may well imagine, we began to take our bearings as soon as the light permitted, and rather cautiously too, because the officers and crew realized that we were in wild territory. We kept close together and before very long discovered some straight-haired natives, darker than Mongolians but not yet black, whom some of the crew said were Patagonian cannibals.

The land was everywhere covered with snow. Moving cautiously along and keeping well on our guard, we suddenly came upon a dark spot that seemed to be

moving. The snow was melted, that much was sure. Our curiosity got the better of us and we advanced close together to investigate. The undulating ground turned out to be the skin-covering of the hole in the earth which some of the reputedly man-eating natives were using as their home. When they appeared at the flap-door, smiled at us and showed only signs of friendliness, it was decided to accept their hospitality, as anything seemed better than the perishingly cold wind that was blowing. It seemed to me, however, too much like the spider and the fly for this to be an entirely congenial resting-place. But we outnumbered them, and some of our crew had been among them before and assured us they were not so bad as they were painted. Just the same we were not for taking any chances of slipping into their soup-pot and so we divided up into watches, keeping one shift on guard all the time during that day and night. I learned later that these Patagonians had abandoned their cannibal practices some time previously, but that it was only a matter of a few decades back when both they and the Canoe Indians of Tierra del Fuego thought nothing of whacking a grandfather or grandmother on the head when they were particularly short of supplies. Only on the following afternoon did the storm abate enough to allow us to launch our boats and head across the channel for the island of Portocok—I think that was the name—which was being used by the Argentine Government as a prison-camp. We had to remain there

two or three weeks as "privileged guests" and were royally cared for. During these days our ship broke up and became a total loss. It was the government transport, bringing provisions, that finally took us off and carried us back to Buenos Aires.

From Buenos Aires I dropped down to Montevideo to look for work. When it proved a more difficult task than I had expected for a sailor to find a job on shore, I started again searching about for a ship. After a bit I signed on in an Argentine steamer, *Blanco de Ripo*, and succeeded in getting only as far as Rio de Janeiro, where the inspecting health officers labeled me for hospital as a fever-patient, although I was feeling fairly normal. Others of the crew had, however, been properly bowled over by it and were raving.

Once in hospital, I was given the black pill against which they had warned me in Cardiff. If you took it, it was pretty apt to kill you; but if you didn't die from the pill, you had a good chance of beating the fever. The two others died, whether from the pill or the fever I never knew. But I didn't give the thing a trial myself, for I held it in my mouth till the chance came to spit it out, as I preferred at that time taking the risk of the fever—and that without further hospital treatment. In the morning hours of that first night, when none of the nurses or orderlies were about, I left by the window and finished my sleep in the park.

The hospital was located on the hillside above the city with a fine view out over the harbor. In those days,

some of the larger ships could not come alongside the wharf on account of the shallow water and had to lie out in the open roadstead, taking their cargo from barges. Since then extensive dredging and other works have made it a fine anchorage and given it a full equipment of docks. But that first night that I spent on the hillside above it, the harbor at low tide was little more than mud flats and stagnant mosquito pools, as fine a fever-trap as you could imagine.

Once I had put myself beyond the pale of the quarantine law, I had to look about in sheds and elsewhere for hiding-places until I could find another ship that would take me out of this hole. The park was a natural one, such as I had never seen anywhere save at East London in Cape Colony, and offered me the best of refuge, though somewhat short on roofing.

In the mornings I used to feel pretty queer at times, nauseated and half ill. Down at the wharf where the tenders came in there was an old Irishman who gave me drinks of Brazilian white rum, which was the only thing that kept me alive.

I hung around the place nearly two months, waiting for a ship. From time to time I slept on board different craft but never found one quite to my liking, until a Danishman came into port that made me homesick to get aboard her. I hung around two or three days before the captain offered me a place. To my joy he said he was going back to Denmark and needed more men. I had seen enough of South America, with its ship-

wrecks, cannibals and fever, and didn't care if I never came back to the continent again.

The Dane was a barquentine whose name I can't for the life of me recall, reason enough as I ought to have for doing so. She was loaded with coffee and carried fifteen or sixteen in crew. With this quota she was a bit shorthanded, just as about ninety per cent of the windjammers in those days made it a practice of being, just to save one or two men's wages on the pay-roll.

We were not out over a week before we found that we had great need of extra hands rather than economy. Someone complained of feeling ill, and soon we realized that the dreaded fever was on us. Man after man went down until more than half the crew were incapacitated, and that before we had done the major part of our voyage. There was little or no care in looking after the sick, as they were left right in the fo'castle with the rest of us who had not yet succumbed. In those days a sailer usually had accommodations for sixteen in the fo'castle, not counting the boatswain, sailmaker, carpenter and cook, although it was not always customary for windjammers to carry a boatswain.

Matters took a serious turn for us when the first man died and half the others were on their backs. We had really no adequate medicines or treatment to check the ravages of the fever. Then two more were sewn up in the last bit of canvas they would ever touch and put over the side. After the first one had

gone, the captain became much more liberal with us in the ration of rum and required no work except just what was necessary in handling the ship.

The chief mate had been the third of those we buried. Daily we searched the horizon for a sail or a line of smoke, without once being able to sight another craft. We were not in any traffic-lane before we came close to England. Once or twice we sighted distant steamers but were unable to reach them with our signals. At night we used rockets and flares without seeing a welcome answer. For weeks our distress-signals were masted. I think we were one hundred seventeen days on the trip, though I am not quite sure.

During the last month the conditions on that barquentine grew daily harder and harder, until it looked as though we should certainly become a derelict, carrying only the corpses of what had once been a crew. What hit us hardest was the illness of the cook. He was a Frenchman and baked the best bread I ever had in any galley. The Danish ships used always to carry a hardtack such as I never saw on other craft. They were made like a round bun, cut in quarters and then zwiebacked. This cook used to do them to perfection. When he fell ill, the few of us that were on our feet had to forage for what little we could pick up between the long hours of duty. I think there were only three of us in the fo'castle at this time.

At last there was only the captain and myself left standing. All the others had died or were prostrate.

During the previous week two of the men had managed to keep about to help us, but they gradually grew yellower and yellower, lost their appetites and finally lay down. There was nothing now that the captain wouldn't do for me. He gave me all the rum I could drink and took turn and turn about with me at the wheel. Once, however, I had to stand seventeen hours without relief, except for very short intervals when the wind was holding steady and I could lash her down long enough to get a drink or grab a few hardtack. With but two of us left we could do little save follow the wind; but fortunately it held steady and fair and allowed us to keep close to our course. Whenever we had to trim sail, the only way we could do it was for the captain to give me the order to fall off or come up the wind a bit, while he slacked away a yard two or three feet and then went across to the other rail and took in an equal amount. After the fever first struck us, we never took in sail or set any new ones. Only once during the entire voyage did we take in a reef. Naturally we could not think of changing our complete sets of canvas on entering and leaving the tropics.

Although I have said that there was no adequate treatment for us on board, the captain did have a general book on diseases and a medicine-chest fitted out with the simplest remedies. He gave me large quantities of quinine in the belief that it was a good preventive. After the cook fell ill and we were reduced to

three or four, and then to the captain and myself, there was no one to look after the sick men, so that you can better imagine than I can tell you what their lot must have been. In Cardiff, before I shipped with the Argentine steamer, I had taken an inoculation against tropical fevers and perhaps have this to thank for my partial immunity. Certainly I slept out enough at Rio and took sufficient other risks to have contracted what ills the climate offered. I never really knew what the fever was which I carried about with me and doctored with the Irishman's rum.

After our constant turns at the wheel or of sleeping on deck to be ready to handle the sheets if the wind changed too violently, the captain and I were getting pretty well worn down. We used to take turn about in foraging food and serving whichever one was at the wheel as best we could. At last a steamer hove in sight and came near enough to us to read our signals. They spoke us and sent men aboard to attach their towline and steer us into a small harbor near Cardiff, for the captain and I were too done-in by this time to keep the wheel. The quarantine officers took all the members of our crew that remained alive to the isolation hospital, while I myself went off to Cardiff for a rest in my boarding-house home. After about ten days the captain and I gathered together another crew and took the brigantine to Copenhagen, where the owners, after hearing the captain's story, treated me handsomely. That enabled me to take another run back

to Stockholm, where I was now accepted as a real sailor.

But there wasn't much in Stockholm for me those days, when I could no longer slide down the chimneys of the Turkish Minister and Prince Karl. I did, however, have many a good laugh at those other days, as I wandered past the grand mansions which I knew so well. Down at the docks I found there was a steamer, *Lofoten,* loaded with iron ore and bound for Rochester on the Medway. She offered me a cheap means of getting back to Cardiff, where I should look for a better ship and take no more South American-men or other tramps.

But in the sailors' world it always seems some one else who does the "disposing," especially for those African coasters. As a matter of fact I never made Cardiff at all on this trip and really never "left" that steamer. Certainly I never got my pay and presume that I am still to this day technically a member of her crew. The first evening we were in Rochester a smooth-tongued individual entertained us with stories and drinks. That was the last we knew. There was a Nova Scotiaman in port, even though she was registered from St. John, New Brunswick, that was trying to get a crew. We didn't know this at the time, nor did we know that she was bound for the "death-coast" of Africa. It was an accepted fact that English sailors and Scandinavians shipping out of the English ports did not care much for Nova Scotiamen. Though they

had a reputation for feeding the men well, they worked them hard and were often very cruel.

We were a big gang, and that crimp shanghaied the whole lot of us, getting six or seven from our steamer. I had now been long enough at sea to know well that captains feed boarding-house masters for shanghaiing individuals or a whole crew when they were having difficulty in filling their quota; but I never before had the doubt raised in my mind as to whether masters who were finished with their crews might not have found it a very economical way of getting rid of them by having some professional runner shanghai the whole lot for another ship. Whatever were the facts in this case it certainly offered rich returns for the individuals doing the shanghaiing. A young Swedish boy who had been a coal-passer on the steamer and who could not speak a word of English was made the cook. The second mate of the Nova Scotiaman was a Swede and the only one who could give him orders. He took it upon himself to teach the Scandinavians in the crew how to speak English and used a rather positive method. Whenever one of them made a mistake, he would hit him. I remember him coming into the galley one day, taking up a ladle and asking the young cook:

"What do you call this?"

"*Scoopa,*" answered the cook.

"Ladle, you dummy!" the mate shouted and whacked him across the head with it at the same time.

But I am a bit ahead of my story. The last I remember of the shore was when we were taken to the pub by the runner. When we woke up, we were in the Nova Scotiaman's fo'castle. We were not awakened decently but were pulled out of our bunks and kicked in the ribs.

"Get up, you blighters! Get out on deck!" was the second mate's greeting to his new charges. Her sails were not yet set, as the tug was just casting off. We were driven into the rigging by the officers with clubs in their hands and made to loose the sails. We had lost all our kits, left behind on the steamer, and were never given anything in return for them. You can imagine that we were not a set of "those jolly Jack Tars" which you read about in books. During the entire voyage we scrapped. There were two cockneys in particular who were always fighting. It was a desperate crowd we were among. The officers never dared to come on deck unarmed. When you are faced with guns and have none yourself, you know that it is foolish to stir up trouble. So long as there was any land in sight, if we could have overpowered the officers, we would certainly have done so and run the craft ashore. But the captain had evidently bought over two or three of the men to side with him, so that the odds were too heavy against us. On the way down the English Channel I had the wheel and was racking my brains as to how we could get the officers under just long enough to enable us to beach her. I feel sure, if I had had the experience of

later years behind me, I should have managed somehow to save us all that unwelcome journey to Liberia.

She was headed for Monrovia. About all I remember of those weeks as a guest of the Nova Scotiaman was the incessant fighting that went on. There was never an end of this, and heads were constantly sore.

In Monrovia we found lying in the bay and the river-mouth two or three sailing-craft and an American steamer. Four of us made up our minds to get on board the latter by hook or by crook and watched our chance from the very moment we cast anchor. It was either the first or the second night that we succeeded, during the morning watch, in slipping over the stern into a ship's boat that was fastened there and making our way to the Yankee. In the morning the captain told us he didn't see how he could do anything for us but that he was willing to take us to the United States without charge, if that would be of any help. We promptly accepted and so left the Nova Scotiaman without any pay and still without kits. Having been cheated out of our money and our clothes on the *Lofoten* and getting nothing for these weeks on the voyage to Africa and across the Atlantic, we had to face landing in America without a penny in our jeans. During these years the life of a sailor was so often one where he either lost or was cheated of all his gains, that he was forced to remain constantly at sea and take all the hardships of wind and weather without ever having much hope of earning his freedom from this

very poor means of keeping body and soul together. Perhaps also this was what made him so jolly and liberal a Jack Tar whenever he did get hold of any money. We gladly worked our passage on the steamer and were given a few dollars apiece by the captain when he put us ashore at Jacksonville, Florida.

By the way, while we are talking about shanghaiing and have now reached an American port, I might tell you of another case that came very close home to us. It was about twenty-five years ago, when a young lad from the north of Norway, where the long nights tend to make the people consumptive, came over to New York to seek employment. He was the son of a fairly well-to-do ship's captain and had studied to be an engineer. At the employment agency where he applied they offered him a job and took him away on the train to start him in his new place. On the way they drugged him and put him on board an oyster-boat. For about three months he was kept out in all kinds of weather and was inadequately supplied with clothes and boots by the captain, for which the latter took most of his wages. The lad had not strength or gumption enough to get away. When they did finally turn him off, after they had finished with him, he was without funds and was too sensitive to beg. So he slept in the parks and took food from garbage-cans. Then he found a "lodging-house" where he was allowed to sit on a bench and lean over a rope that was stretched in front of it. For this he paid five cents a night.

A friend of ours, Jansen, found him one day in the park, got him a place in the Midvale Steel Works and asked us to board him. He was only with us a little while before we noticed he had a very persistent cough, but we couldn't get him to go to a doctor. As some of the neighbors insisted that it was consumption, we went to a doctor ourselves and procured him some medicine; but that didn't do much good, and we had to send him to the hospital in Philadelphia. After his treatment there we managed to collect enough money to send him home to Norway. Only five days after being back with his people, he passed away, probably a victim of the last bit of shanghaiing I remember hearing about.

It seems strange now to look back upon that short stay in this country which has now become home to me. Little did I dream then of the unusual years that must follow in South Africa and the generation in this part of the world before I should sit down to try to recount to you something of the wanderings and the interests that filled them. Jacksonville, though a delightful spot, was then nothing more to me than the port in which I found another steamer—this time also one under the American flag, bound for Constantinople. I found the city of the Sultan most picturesque when you viewed it from the Dardanelles, but a miserable town once you're in it, with narrow streets, high houses and thousands of scavenging pariah dogs.

Passing into the Black Sea, we went up to Odessa

and then headed back through the Dardanelles and the Mediterranean for Swansea, Wales. There I had what had now become the rather unique experience of being paid off and at once returned to Cardiff, where I not only used up my savings but remained so long that I found myself in debt to my boarding-master. He, however, secured me a position as third engineer on a steamer sailing from Barry. I think my rate was seven pounds ten shillings, big money for those days. But alas, all of it that I saw was the first month's pay in advance, which went toward squaring off my account. Before I explain the reason for this further instance of a sailor's poor financing, I must tell you of another little incident that occurred in the boarding-house at Barry, while the boat was lading.

The place was filled with Greeks and Turks. We started the brush at table. Something happened in passing the dishes that did not suit me or the other fellow, and the trouble began. There were sixteen or eighteen of us around, when the argument passed the verbal stage. In all my scraps I have always fought clean and never used a weapon—except once, when I hit a man with a knuckle-duster. I marked him, I'm afraid, for life and was terribly sorry about it afterward. You can take on a black eye or have a tooth knocked out and get over those temporary derangements, but you can never lose the marks of a knuckle-duster if it catches you square.

In this fight, however, I found that I was up against

not one, but several men with knives. Finns and Turks are pretty handy with this weapon, but Greeks are not so vicious. They were too many for me this time and, what was more, they had the door blocked. With several wounds and bleeding freely, I couldn't risk trying to beat my way through the gang and had to take French leave by the window.

There must have been some bad joss connected with that trip, as the ship fared even worse than I did in getting away from Barry. She took on her full cargo of coal and battened down the hatches while the rain was falling in torrents. All went well until about ten or eleven o'clock on the second evening out when we were just passing the big lighthouse on the Spanish Horn. Without a word of warning a terrific explosion occurred. The after hatch was splintered and blown into the air, and a solid column of flame shot up like that from a steel crucible. In a second we had been changed from a black, monotonous, throbbing freighter, plodding along in the dark, to a potential hell of fire, lighting up the sea for miles around. The wet coal had generated a gas that had gone up in spontaneous combustion. The captain at once gave orders to change our course and steer straight for the lighthouse. In only a few minutes both the fore and after holds were spouting flames and the whole ship was growing so hot that the helmsman could hardly stay at the wheel. The four boats were lowered away, and all hands ordered into them. The quartermaster and

the captain remained in the wheelhouse until things were getting so hot around them that it looked as though flames might break out anywhere. Then they came over the rail. The engines had been left with full steam turned on, and the wheel was lashed square amidships, so that the great pulsing inferno was roaring toward the land without a human soul aboard.

All four boats were full. We held on to towing-lines and hung on to the ship's flanks as long as we could stand the heat and were willing to risk the danger of further explosions. Then we slipped them and were but a few minutes away from the steamer's sides when her plates opened and let the sea in upon the mass of burning coal. Amid booming reports like claps of thunder and in a great cloud of steam she foundered and went under. We had to row for an hour or two to make the lighthouse. There we were pounded on the rocks and thoroughly soaked, though all of us managed to get ashore uninjured. We had, however, every one of us lost our kits, save only the clothes in which we stood.

The people in the lighthouse helped us to dry our clothes and gave us a most liberal supply of wine, delicious wine, which I remember as almost good enough to warrant being wrecked there again. In the morning they put us into hay-wagons and took us to a near-by town. There touch was established with the owners and we were sent back to Cardiff.

This time while I was back in my home port, an in-

cident nearly occurred which would have changed the whole course of my life. The boarding-master, who had become almost a foster-father to me, was evidently desirous of making our relations even closer and welcoming me as a son-in-law. Nor were the girl and myself at all averse to this; but I just felt with the roving life I was leading that it wasn't right for me to take on the responsibility of caring for a wife, and so the affair hung fire until I should come back again after my next trip.

Almost destitute as I was following all the wrecks and shanghaiing experiences which had been my sailor's luck during the past few years, my benefactor not only found me a new ship, the *John McCloud*, bound for South Africa, but also fitted me out and sent me on board well down over my plimsoll marks the night before she was to sail. If it hadn't been for his willingness to drown my parting sorrows, I should really have felt pretty badly about going away from him and his daughter at this time.

The moon was full that night—as full as I was—and got me into trouble. She threw a shadow just off the dock over the water, and I walked right on the shadow! They fished me up and stowed me on board, along with the last of the cargo. The following day, when I was feeling pretty blue over having left Cardiff and was discussing with one of the other members of the crew my foster-father and his daughter, he told me something about the girl that made me bluer and

sicker still, glad to leave Cardiff for good and all and never care whether I saw the place again or not.

This may have helped to get me mixed up in a scrap with the mate, for I was following my rule of having a proper stand-up-and-knock-down fight with the first officer before we were twenty-four hours out of port. I was getting the better of him and just beginning to feel that I had about established my standing on this craft, when he took refuge in the old trick of using a belaying-pin and laid me out.

Now the *John McCloud* was a full-rigged three-master, one of the finest ships I have ever seen on the sea —and well known to be one of the toughest. My ducking the night before had given me a cold that probably wasn't helped any by the scrap with the mate. In any case I had to lie up and was not about for nearly a fortnight. When I did finally turn out, the captain was so disgusted with me for the time I had lost that he chased me through the rigging on every possible occasion. It reminds me of quite another experience I had on one of my other ships—I can't remember which now—that will give you an idea of my readiness to go aloft.

On many square-riggers it was the custom in those days for the A.B.'s, especially the older and heavier among them, to be allowed to remain on deck or go up to work only the mainsails or topsails, while the apprentices and boys were sent higher up. In this case the captain ordered one of the boys aloft to fix some-

thing on the mizzenroyal. There were no rafters on the shrouds to help the boy to get to the top. He managed to scramble up as far as the saddle-horns and then to the topgallant crosstrees. As the ship was rolling from about twenty to twenty-five degrees, the boy lost his head, grew dizzy and came down. He had only a beating for his pains and the order to go back and do what he had been told. He repeated his failure and had just been given a second beating with a kick to send him once more aloft, when I interfered and asked the captain to take the wheel to let me show the boy how to do it.

Then I explained to the lad that it was not nearly so difficult to climb a mast when the ship is rolling as it is when she is holding steady on a tack. All you have to do is to wait until she's well over and the mast as far down as possible, then you shinny up the upper side as fast as you can. As she rights herself, you swing round to the other side and make another spurt, as she rolls well over. You'd be surprised how much easier it is to climb a mast when the ship is twenty or twenty-five degrees off the perpendicular than when she is straight up and down.

I never remember when I couldn't climb or didn't climb. One time when I was a bit of a lad, I went to a fair and won the prize of five crowns for getting all the way up a greased pole; but I had a good licking when I returned home, because the five crowns wouldn't pay for a new suit!

PART II

THE GOLD

CHAPTER VI

Good Hope and Diamonds

WE were eighty-seven days out from Cardiff, when we sighted Table Mountain behind Cape Town. Though I had been to the Cape before, I lost none of the thrill of coming again within sight of the impressive scenery formed by the historic mountain that gave backing and character to the town. The great plateau stood out against the sky like a veritable table, down over which the white-flecked blue seemed to drape itself as a cloth, making a board fit only for gods and giants.

It was the custom in those days for sailors to go ashore in groups of two or three for the gentle rackets that always marked our first evenings off the ship after a long run. In our crew there was a young Norwegian, Adolf by name, for whom none of the others had a very great fancy. I didn't care much for him myself, but out of pity for the lad I consented to pair up with him, little thinking what the results would be.

All of us were given a shore-leave allowance of two pounds ten for the A.B.'s and less for ordinary seamen like Adolf who had not yet passed as A.B.'s and had not possessed the nerve to come aboard and announce

themselves as such—which was the way many of us secured our rating.

So off we went, apparently for a sailor's evening ashore. But we had other and greater matters in mind for the moment. That the *John McCloud* was a fine ship, no one denied; but the very spirit that kept her sleek and clean spelled rough going for many of us in the watches. So I went ashore that night fatter by far than even my liberal size warranted. Everything I thought most necessary and valuable out of my kit was stowed somewhere around my hull or in the scuppers. Adolf had nothing with him.

The moment we were off the gang-plank we headed for the Sailors' Home. I can't remember now the name of the street where it was located, though I could draw you a map of the town with most of the prominent buildings and principal places of interest. That was back in '91, too far away for my memory to hold all those names. I remember just how it lay, though, from the Catholic Church, where I later got my first job in Africa. The man who had the contract to paint the church advertised for a steeple-jack to gild the cross, and I saw no reason why anyone who had been aloft as much as I should not take the easy money he was offering.

Finding a man who would stand watch over my "cargo" for a while, I went back on board for another loading and managed thus to disembark most of the things I needed. When we had gathered all the infor-

mation we could at the Home, we went along to a ship-chandler's to pick up a few provisions. Then we set our course up over the pass between Table Mountain and Lion's Head, fully minded to put as much of Africa as we could between ourselves and that captain before he sent us an invitation to come back on board.

We struck Victoria Road along the beach and found an old shack that looked like the place for two tired tars to put up for the night—or what was left of it. We were wakened in the morning by the sound of pounding hoofs and looked out to see two of the mounted Cape Constabulary going by with a very purposeful air. That they did not turn aside to examine our lodging-house eased our minds considerably.

Once they were well on the way and we had sampled our galley supplies we struck out again along the shore, not knowing where the road would lead us nor how soon we should come upon the next town. We tramped all day, with one or two breaks for food, until along toward evening we came upon a wood that looked inviting for the night. We had no more than settled down, when a West Indian negro hove in sight and spoke us.

"Hello boys, what are you doing? Are you runaway sailors?" We didn't like the sound of that, so I asked him:

"How are you interested in what we are doing?"

"Oh, you needn't be afraid. I was one myself once

. . . Come along to my house and I'll put you up for the night." He lived just a bit away. His house had only a single room with a dirty floor, no window, just an opening to let in the light. The bed was a pile of loose straw on the floor, covered with a coarse cloth-like burlap.

The negro showed real sympathy for us and entertained us as best he could. His hospitality would have been much more welcome, if it had not been counterbalanced by some of the other inmates of his house—small ones, the jumpy kind. He had a wife and daughter of seventeen or eighteen. They gave us a good meal of fried fish and some sort of wine.

During the conversation he volunteered to talk to his boss, a Norwegian fisherman who had a place only twelve or fifteen minutes away, down at Wood's Bay.

When it came time to turn in, there was not only no question of rooms to choose from, but not even an option as to the bed one would have. The single heap of straw with the burlap covers served family and guests alike.

The following morning the West Indian was up and away before daylight for the fishing and was back by ten with word that his boss had jobs for us. We immediately went down through the woods to the shore and met the big Norwegian, Pete, who offered to take us on and pay us according to the weight of fish we took. The catch at that season consisted of a fish called snook, that varied from thirty inches to three feet in

length. As the run was good we found his men were averaging about a pound sterling a day for their work. But we beginners did not do much more than half of this at first, because we were not skilled enough in handling the lines.

Pete was married to a Cape woman, a mulatto, and had a family of fine children, who were well brought up and very likable. I immediately felt at home with my Scandinavian boss and started in to work with a will. On the third or fourth day matters clouded a bit for us. We were fishing well out to sea, just in sight of the headlands, in a big ship's boat some thirty or thirty-five feet long. One of the smaller craft came off to tell us that some Cape police were looking about for runaway sailors and that we had better find some way to dodge them. As the sea didn't offer much cover to hide behind, the captain of our boat volunteered to stow us forward with our heads close up against the decking and the fish thrown in over us to hide us completely from any one looking in from amidships.

When the boat struck the shore and the other eight or ten in the crew went overboard to help run her in to the tackle that drew her up on rollers to the beach, we lay quiet among our fish while the officers of the law examined the men to no effect. Once they were away, Pete ordered us dug out and taken to his house. There we had a good laugh and a better bath before we came to the more serious side of the escape. That

spelled breaking up our first chance of regular employment and sent us on the road again.

Norwegian Pete thought it too great a risk to try to shelter us and so advised us to go along to a big fruit-farm two or three hours away. We trudged the road into the foothills and came to a wonderful plantation of most attractive-looking fruit-trees. The principal ones were figs, plums, oranges and persimmons. Then there were grapes by the hundreds of acres as well. The proprietor was a Boer named Freylinghuysen. When we asked for a job the old gentleman only cursed us out as some more of those —— English. But as I spoke to him in German, he softened a bit and said he would give us a trial. He had a son, Albert, who took us into one of the groves and set us to work gathering up the fruit that had fallen from the trees.

To my surprise all the different kinds were thrown together into vats, some yeast added and the mixture allowed to ferment. After a bit I became familiar with the process and saw them drawing off the liquor for distillation. This product was then stored in big charred vats for ageing. The result was a species of rum which was called "Cape smoke" and sold in Cape Town for somewhere around one shilling sixpence a bottle. Other and finer wines were made from the grapes.

After we had been at work a few days and they saw that I was rather sober and steady-going, they gave me

charge of the wine-cellar and the dealing out of the daily ration to the natives. Each man was allowed one quart of light wine twice a day, the first with his dinner and the second as he was going home at night. We had forty or fifty of these Cape-boys, all of whom lived off the place. As the weeks went by, Albert trusted me with work around the stills and gave me full charge of the natives' wine allowance.

One day, some six or seven weeks after our arrival, his sister Olga had a birthday party. The young people gathered from miles around, all of them Boers of the same type as my employer's family. When the fun was well under way, Albert came out and told me that Olga wanted me to show her guests my tattoo marks.

Big as I was in those days, I was quite bashful and felt a little hesitant at first, but soon gained courage enough not only to show and explain the seven figures on my two arms, but even to bare the Swedish coat-of-arms with which a Bombay tattooer had covered my breast. There, however, the exhibition stopped. When one of the girls asked if there were no more, I could only blush and tell her that the others were too delicately located to be presentable in such a gathering.

Having a bit of the circus-man's instinct developed by my six or seven years of wandering the world around, I suddenly bethought me of my hat and made clear to the party of young people the state of my exchequer. If I was to exhibit as "the tattooed man," why not take advantage of my place in the side-show?

The trick worked wonders for me and netted me over twenty-one shillings, which, with the pay of seven shillings a week that I had hoarded like a miser since my arrival on the estate, gave me a tidy little sum for a lad of that day.

My treasure so burned my pocket that I could no longer resist the call of the town. With that rough skipper of the *John McCloud* reported out of harbor, I set out the very next day with Adolf to make a different kind of entry into Cape Town. We took a train that landed us there on Saturday afternoon, in time to let us fit ourselves out, as gentlemen of that time and place were wont to do. I bought a suit of white duck, a cork topee and a pair of white canvas shoes. Patent-leather ones were more the style for the real doggy tars of that day, but I couldn't afford them and the belt too—and the belt became a necessity the moment I set my eyes on it. Of many-colored silk seven or eight inches wide, it had a watch-pocket and a change-pocket in its folds and possessed an air of swagger that no sailor with money enough to buy it could resist. A new shirt and tie completed the costume in which I planned to make the round of the docks in the morning.

Sunday dawned bright and clear for us, and we sallied forth. We wanted to see with our own eyes the empty berth of the *John McCloud* to verify the reports of her departure. So we swung along to the docks, in through the gate and out along the pier. As

we were just emerging from one of the alleyways between the corrugated iron sheds, we found ourselves face to face with the captain and the mate, standing talking together on the deck of our very own *John McCloud!* Though our stomachs heaved, we showed calm weather outside and rolled along up the wharf. Would the disguise of our new coat of paint hide our familiar lines? It was an anxious moment or two till we could make the next alleyway between the sheds. Then we legged it, feeling that nothing short of Cairo would be our next docking-place.

We did, however, lay to at our boarding-house for a while and made up our minds that it was best for us to part company. Adolf, once fear had eased off a bit, decided that he would remain in the city, while I was for getting down over the horizon from those officers and their policemen-friends. In a saloon near-by I ran across a Swede, who had signed on as a cook on a very comfortable ship, just to get out to South Africa. He had not had any special trouble on board but simply did not want to be a sailor. He had four pounds and some shillings in his pocket and said he would go halves with me, if I would take him inland where he could get a place to work. He spoke no English and had never been in the country before. So we struck a bargain and set out at once.

Two features of our week of wandering remain prominent in my memory. They were simple but help to show how the country and some of us have changed

with the years. As for ourselves, we were little more than common tramps.

Here and there we got a job or a bit of food. In one place we found a Russian who had captured a whale in a rather novel way. The king of the ocean, driven by some very unusual instinct, had run up a small tidal river and stuck there, unable to turn around, when the tide went out. The old Russian had once been a sailor and made good use of his knowledge to capture and cut up the unwonted catch. We worked with him for three or four days at the very fine wages of five shillings per day. Then we went loafing about the little seaport of Simon's Town, which was then the base of the British fleet in South African waters. All that there was of the place was strung out along a single street. Opposite the house at the far end of this we had the bad luck to run into a policeman, who gave us a start with his warning:

"If you two don't quit trying to bum your way through here and get out, we'll find you a place where you'll be given more than a night's lodging."

"Excuse me," I answered the law, "that's the last house. We're out of the town now." And off we went to try our luck elsewhere.

A little further along we struck it rich at a fine-looking place by the roadside, where there was a young girl standing by the gate. I said to her:

"Pardon, Miss, but we are strangers here and are looking for work. It is late now, and we would

very much like to get a night's lodging before we go on."

She looked us over and called to some one inside. Out came more of her own age. We had applied at a girls' school! Not to be dismayed by such a situation, we waited for the lady principal and had the good fortune to be taken in, given excellent food and real beds in most unusual surroundings for wandering tars. Better than all that, the principal sent us along in the morning to a Dane who was putting up a building and who gave us work.

My companion was a much older man than I. He must have been fully thirty at the time and had learned carpentry as a trade. While he was quite at home on his part of the job, I was given the task of laying a single-brick wall, something that had not been my daily occupation by any means. Nevertheless all went well until toward evening, when my carpenter-friend rested the plank of a scaffolding on the thing and it toppled over! That was very poor requital for the good principal's courtesy, but the Dane treated us very generously and only sent us along to find something more in our line. After three or four weeks of this life on the road, I thought it safe to return to Cape Town, where I hoped to find something more to my liking and more in keeping with the tasks for which my previous life of hard work had fitted me.

The very first day I heard some men discussing the amount one of them intended to bid on a contract for

flooring, ceiling and wainscoting about twenty houses that lacked only this woodwork to finish them. Knowing how many stranded sailors there were about who would be glad to work for just enough to keep them, I conceived the idea of becoming a contractor and put in a bid a little under the amount I had heard discussed. That landed the job which set me on my feet in Africa and ended the short hobo-period of my life between the days on the sea and those on the Rand. In spite of my first experience as an artisan on the brick wall, we sailors made good on this house-finishing job.

With the money which my novel contracting brought me I went at once to Johannesburg, the gold-mining center of South Africa in the heart of the Transvaal. You probably know that the Rand takes its name from the Witwatersrand, a chain of mountains some one hundred fifty miles long, which are so rich that you can dig down almost anywhere and strike gold. It is not always in paying quantities, to be sure, but it is invariably there.

Arrived in Johannesburg, I was told by some of the Scandinavians in the boarding-house where I put up that men were wanted at Robinson Deep, only half an hour's walk from the house. So I went along and was soon signed on as a hoisting-engine operator at a pound a day. As we had mine-houses to live in and paid only four pounds a month for our mess, I began to feel that I was really in a country of gold. And

what I was receiving was low wages at that period—only a beginner's rate.

But with the "dust" of those first days in the mines came that other inevitable accompaniment, the desire to make more of it through cards rather than through hard work. But I was very canny of my money during the first months and played low, chiefly for the fun of it with some Scandinavian friends. At the same time I bought "blind" a block of land in Umtali—just across the Mashonaland border of Portuguese East Africa—which was just then being boomed on the Johannesburg exchange. This lay dormant for some years but will come into the story later.

After five or six months at Robinson Deep I saw an advertisement for miners at Simrun Jack, one of the biggest mines on the Rand. I applied for a place underground to learn all I could of mining and was faced at once with the question as to whether I knew the Kaffir language. I had to answer in the negative, but succeeded in being taken on in spite of this.

The life there was dull, with nothing to do but work, cards and an occasional evening when we got the Kaffirs to come in and give us some of their native music and dances. After three or four months of this I made a big haul at the card-table one pay-night, taking more than I could have saved from several months of work. That gave me too much of a fortune to permit of more of the underground drudgery when the sunshine of Durban offered such a strong contrast. So off

I went the following day with three or four others, bound to see the sights in a miner's way and fully intending to come back after a week or two of fun.

But there I met a man named Snowden who persuaded me to go with him to Kimberley, where he promised high wages and big chances. I went along but found that the wages were even lower than those I had been receiving. There were other features, however, that made up for the slight difference in pay.

I saw a fine-looking sergeant of the Kimberley police walking the street with cork soles on his shoes an inch or more thick. That interested me, so I fell to talking to him. I found out that the place was so hot at times that nothing short of this unusual insulation could protect one's feet from the burning streets. The whole town was built on the blue-ground sediment overflow or waste from the diamond washeries in the De Beers mine. This packed and baked until it got so hot that you could not stand on it with bare feet in the hottest season.

But there was more to our talk than just that. I had secured a place as hoisting-engine man in one of the mine sheds and did not like the boarding-house that Snowden had picked for us, so I asked the sergeant where an honest lad could get a better one. Somehow he seemed to like the cut of my jib from the very outset and told me that they had a vacant room in their house, which they let out from time to time. I went along with him but did not worry much about looking

at the room, for my eyes were too busy to waste time on that.

He had a daughter, Anna, just coming nineteen, who was the most attractive-looking girl I had seen in South Africa. With money in my pocket and a good job, I couldn't keep my eyes off her from the very moment she came up over the horizon. They were good people, too. The sergeant was born a Hollander, while the mother was a Boer, raised in the country. Anna, like most of the children who had grown up in those surroundings, spoke Kaffir like a native.

The moment we struck a bargain for the room, I steered for my other dock, holystoned decks, set all my canvas—especially the silk belt—and sailed into their little cove with as fine a front as I could put up. I was blond, had a wave in my hair, too, and was not going to take the wash from any other craft in that race, you may be sure. And I saw Anna looking me over out of the corner of her eye every time she had a good chance, so that I knew that I had started right.

I hadn't been there long before I found out that she was fond of horses and rode a good deal, just as many of the people of the country do. As I had learned to handle horses on the farms where I was sent to work while still a boy in Sweden, it pleased me immensely to find a girl who would take the veldt at a gallop with me. She had a beautiful mount, too.

I had noticed from the very outset that her father

didn't mind having me around and so was not very much surprised one day to have him tell me that I was just the kind of fellow they were looking for in the force. Steady pay, regular employment and especially a uniform and membership in the squad that would help make a man of me in Anna's eyes looked too good to me to refuse. Consequently two or three weeks of hoisting diamonds satisfied my ambitions along that line, though it did mean moving from their home into barracks. But that was more than made up for when the evenings off duty came around.

It gave me my own horse, too, which was the biggest part of the swag. On Sundays and when I had hours free, I used to go for long rides with Anna and her friends. I'll never forget the way she rode. She was a lovely blond with clear blue eyes that would drive a sailor mad; and when she turned on me with a dare to take a jump or race her over the veldt, I could just imagine myself sweeping her from her own horse and carrying her off to some wild castle and keeping her there as a robber's bride. When it came to the hours of work, there wasn't anything I was afraid of or wouldn't do to make a name for myself with her father and the rest of the force.

One day I lost out. We were riding with a group of friends to an ostrich-farm that belonged to the Duncans, whose daughter was a close pal of Anna. It was a huge ranch of thousands of acres and apparently thousands of birds. We met there "Zambezi Jack," who

was keeping company with Miss Duncan and afterward married her. He got his nickname from the way he used to brag about what he had done on the Zambezi, the alligators he had killed there, and such stuff in general. I didn't cotton much to the fellow and was trying to take a bit of the wind out of his sails in one way or another, thinking all the time it wouldn't hurt my standing with Anna.

I don't remember now just how it happened, but it came about somehow through my mental arrogance in the matter of ostriches and what they could or couldn't do. Anyway, I was standing up before one of the ungainly-looking beasts, when all of a sudden I wasn't—I was sprawling on the ground, knocked flat by a single stroke of the beggar's wing. The descent of the Kimberley police to that position crumbled all the superiority I had begun to pile up over Zambezi Jack and left him cock of the walk for a time.

But he was only an employee in the office of the De Beers Company, while I had more of a man's work outside to do. The first months in the force brought plenty of gymnasium training and military drill. It wasn't to be wondered at that my farm and sailor days gave my six feet length overall a bit of an advantage in these exercises and soon sent me into the ring as the representative of the force against some of the old timers around the mine. Here again, however, I was young at the game and went up against some hard-bit men as big or bigger than I was, one of whom treated

me to a revelation closely akin to that of the ostrich.

It didn't hurt me with Anna, though, for she knew I was fighting square and making a good name for the force as real sportsmen. We used to go to dances together, and one night after the fight she told me this in so many words. The white population of Kimberley were well-to-do, with wages good and living low, so that we had plenty of dances and other forms of amusement. She helped me, too, with my language studies, for I had to work hard at the Kaffir tongue all these months.

For the first weeks I was more or less on probation as a special, after which they gave me the rank of a regular. As such I had the routine duties of the force and sometimes went into plain clothes, especially before I was well known, to try to trap diamond-smugglers.

Although every one who has read anything of South Africa knows that Kimberley is the greatest diamond center in the world, you may not have heard how some of the problems around the mine are met. First, perhaps, I should repeat that the city is built on clay-like material that has come up from the mine and been slushed through the washeries, then run out as waste. The earth underneath the city is honeycombed with tunnels and shafts, where the diamond-bearing blue ground has been taken out to be washed for the precious stones. This "blue ground" is really a species

of soft rock and has to be allowed to decompose in the air for many months before it can be slushed with water and run through the washing plants.

The De Beers Company controlled the Kimberley mines—all of them within a radius of three miles—and dominated the city. The white labor employed, if they were not in direct contact with the parts of the process where the diamonds were handled, was searched fairly thoroughly by the company's police every day as they went out. But the native labor, that ran into the thousands, had to go into a fenced enclosure for long periods, usually three months, without being permitted to leave. Then the search was so thorough that the men were even compelled to take an unasked-for dose of a strong laxative to guard against the thefts by swallowing, which earlier accounted for a portion of the huge total loss each year. I have seen this estimated at millions of dollars.

Aside from the unscaleable fence with its network of barbed wire, the company maintained almost as strong a police force of its own as that of the city. Our chief part in the problem was to try to catch the smugglers, once they had the diamonds outside the mine cordon. During my first months I was put into plain clothes to try to run down a suspect in a leak that had been discovered. The trail led to a Malay, who slipped out of Kimberley to Cape Town with myself on his heels. He boarded the *Norman Castle*, which was lying out in the harbor away from the dock. That meant

going off in a small boat. Just as I touched the deck, the man, who had evidently known he was being tracked, threw overboard a shot-gun which he had been carrying as part of his kit. As our search of him and his dunnage yielded nothing, we had to infer that the stones were hidden in the barrel or stock of the gun.

That seemed to tie up well with a theory we had developed that he or his confederate inside the mine area had been shooting the diamonds out into a bank of earth with small enough loads of powder behind them to bury them only a short distance in the dirt.

About this same time I had another plain-clothes detail to work myself into the confidence of two men, an Italian and a Greek, who were suspected of smuggling the stones. You must know that every diamond bought or sold carried a certificate with it and that no one was allowed to deal in them without a license. This was one of the most rigorous controls exercised to prevent illicit trading.

After I had lived around the same neighborhood and frequented the same public houses as the two suspects for several days, I finally grew intimate enough with them through card-playing and drinking to venture an offer to buy any diamonds they might be able to get hold of for me. They fell into the trap and sold me some stones. Unfortunately for them, the banknotes with which I paid were all marked. The men were arrested right after the deal had been closed

with the tell-tale money on them and were taken to Cape Town for their prison-term.

Our principal work in the force, however, was handling the rough elements that are bound to gather around a rush town like Kimberley. We had many narrow squeaks and close calls in these affairs. Once I was shot through the helmet, when I jumped into a gang fight on the street. Another case was less dangerous but most unusual. I heard shrieks of "Murder!" coming from a shack and rushed in to find a Malay-Hottentot woman being beaten by her Malay husband. She was drunk and wild with rage. In trying to solve the problem I found it necessary to arrest her and had my hands full in doing it. She squirmed like a snake, slipping out of my grasp or tearing herself out of her clothes so repeatedly that, by the time I finally landed her in the station, she did not have a stitch on her. It wasn't a gentlemanly way to treat her, but you might just as well have tried to hold an eel without squeezing it.

All these were small affairs, however, when compared with the one that nearly cost me my life. Naturally there were plenty of bad characters in a town like this who wanted vengeance on us members of the police, if only they could get us without being caught. Personally I stood fairly well with the gangs as I never browbeat any one and only acted when it was absolutely necessary. But I had a pal on the force named Robinson who was not in favor. It was a rule that none

of us could take a drink when in uniform. So one evening Robinson and I walked into the bar of the European Hotel in plain clothes to have a half-and-half. As the old man behind the bar was just in the act of serving us, I happened to turn my head quickly enough to see a beer-glass flying through the air, but not soon enough to save Robinson from getting it square in the back of the head. There were some dozen men around the tables in the corner from where it came.

I was just in time to see the man who threw it take a half-filled glass into his hand to try to put us off the scent. Without thinking of the consequences, I drew my gun and smashed the glass in his hand, merely to put him on notice that we knew where the other had come from. That started the fight.

I called to Robinson, who was only slightly hurt, to keep back-to-back with me as the crowd came on. The old bartender shouted and tried to interfere, but those men required more than words to stop them. I grabbed an iron café-table with a marble top and swung it at the head of the first to reach us. This made them wilder than ever, and we had to dodge not only glasses but every article they could lay their hands on. They didn't get us, though, in spite of their numbers, and before the fray was over, we laid out most of them or drove the rest from the room. Two of them, to my great regret, never got up again, and Robinson and I had to appear for trial on a charge of murder.

I was pretty well scared when the scrap was over and saw that there had been fourteen of them against us. I couldn't help thinking of Anna and wondering what she would say to all this. But I knew there was no blame to be laid at our door, though I wasn't so sure how the law would deal with the facts. The result was very different from what we feared. The judge not only acquitted us on the plea of self-defence, but Sergeant X—said we were too good to be wasted on ordinary Kimberley duty and so sent us to Malay Camp, the toughest suburb of the city. We had, however, to pay £240 for the damages that had been done to the hotel bar, where there was hardly a table, door or window that wasn't smashed.

Malay Camp was just like the Chinatown of many of our big cities at home, filled with the Malays who had come into the diamond-workings from Borneo, Sumatra and Java. The worst thing I found in the Camp was the Mohammedan mosque, which was just across from our barrack. From its tower the muezzin started to holler and shout at five o'clock, so that sleep was impossible until he had finished summoning the Faithful to prayer. When we had been on late night-duty, that man's religious fervor nearly drove us into another crime.

But we had, instead, to be very careful of the religious practices of the colony and do everything we could to protect them. Among the Malays there were also many Turks, Greeks and Malagasy—natives of

Madagascar. They all lived in huts and shacks or long barracks, most of them owned by the company. One of our force had married a beautiful Malay woman and had a family of several very attractive and well-behaved children.

As the months went by I worked harder and harder to make good with both Sergeant X—and Anna. We had more and more rides and dances together. I was thinking only of her those days, when suddenly along came what looked like a good chance to further my plans. It was late in October, 1893. The call came for volunteers to go to Bulawayo to help quell the Matabele rebellion. I had already become a sergeant and was drawing £14 a month. For those enlisting to go north the pay was to be doubled.

CHAPTER VII

The Matabele Rebellion of 1893

A FORCE of three hundred forty men was raised at Kimberley and called the Diamond Field Horse. We heard that another of about nine hundred was forming in Cape Town under the name of the Irish Rifles. The band played us out of Kimberley, and the town gave us a big send-off at the station. But I had lost my enthusiasm, when it came to parting with Anna. The glory seemed to have gone out of it all. Instead I had only an all-gone feeling that made me wonder what had happened to my insides. I was certainly hard hit and did not want to leave my riding and dancing companion, even for the exploits that might make it possible for me to come back and claim her hand. Yet we had to go, now that the die was cast, and had to put a bold face on it too.

Sergeant Bartholomew of our force had discouraged me from the outset, telling me that it would bring me no good, this fighting with the natives. I didn't know very much then what it was all about. We had only heard that it was one of the toughest corners the white man had got into in South Africa and that scores of

them were being scalped. It seemed but natural to go to their rescue.

Matabeleland was being developed then as something equal to, or perhaps ahead of the Rand. The real facts probably were that the Rand had been all staked by every Tom, Dick and Harry that could get to Johannesburg, while Matabeleland still offered plenty of pay-ground where claims could be marked down. Over a large area in the new territory there were prospectors digging their pits every four or five miles. It was these men whom the natives were falling upon or driving into the towns of Bulawayo and Tati.

Mafeking was then the head of the rail, and it was there that most of us received our mounts. I had, however, brought my horse from Kimberley, as all of us in the police had our own. Of the seven hundred miles to Bulawayo, we had still roughly two-thirds to travel from the railhead, much of it over sandy country that was nearly a desert. We were equipped to move fast, with our luggage on pack-mules and horses.

The first day out was a lively one for me, as I volunteered to help a Finn—who had been given a wild broncho—reduce his mount to the horizontal. He had not had much riding experience and so gladly changed with me. The animal spent most of its time rearing square up on its hind legs or bucking. By the time night came he had me fagged, but he too was a bit done in. He was white instead of black when I got through with him and turned him over to the Finn.

By starting at four or five in the morning and traveling until nine, then taking the road again between half-past three and eight or nine in the evening, according to the light, we managed to do about twenty-five miles a day.

What was the usual method of travel along this route in those days? Quite different from the way we were making it. The whole distance from Mafeking to Bulawayo was covered by a coach-service that operated like a post-route. There were stations every twenty miles for changing horses and then at greater intervals rest-houses, that furnished meals and all necessary supplies for the traveler. The coaches were very much like the old-timers of the western plains in America, with room inside for twelve or fourteen passengers and space on the top for luggage. They were drawn by sixteen or eighteen horses, which galloped a large part of the way. On each coach was a bugler who gave warning of our approach to the station, so that the change of horses could be all ready the moment we drew up.

Both the drivers and the servants at the stations were natives, mostly Cape-boys, as the Kaffirs were never given posts of responsibility such as these. On the box was always one driver to hold the reins and another man to wield the great, long whip that cracked like a gun in the hands of these experts.

With the horses at the station standing all harnessed and ready to be hitched to the coach and in such fine

condition that they were good for twenty miles at top speed, these lumbering vehicles actually made seventy or eighty miles a day and thus covered the distance from Mafeking to Bulawayo in seven or eight days with no night travel.

This old post-route, the one we were now following, lay just along the western boundary of the present state of Transvaal through the easternmost section of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. We rode down the valley of the Notuani River, then along the Limpopo until we struck north to the Tati district and the settlement of that name. At the time it consisted of only one big building, with the power-house, huts and mess-hall of the mine in the distance.

While we rested there, I examined these huts with considerable interest, as they were different from any I had previously seen. They were made of bamboo or other poles tied together and then plastered both in and out with a mixture of mud and cow-dung, the latter being much used as a binder by the natives throughout this part of Africa. Incidentally they also use it for preserving floors against the ravages of ants. The roof is set five or six inches above the top of the side walls to allow a free circulation of air through the rooms. The roof itself is made of brush and mud seven or eight inches thick and furnishes a good insulation against the severe heat of the region. Later I myself lived in a house of this type and had intimate experience of the versatility of such roofs. They can

leak like a sieve one minute and be perfectly tight the next, due simply to the intervention of a native servant with a mixture of mud and cow-dung to plaster them.

We were a jovial, happy-go-lucky lot, as we traveled those five hundred miles, most of us hard enough to consider twenty-five miles a day a mere picnic trot. Many tall stories were told of life all over the continent, but it remained for one of the troop to provide himself with material for capturing the prize by killing an alligator twenty-eight feet long, the biggest that any of us had ever seen or heard of being taken from the Limpopo or any other stream.

Naturally we talked much about the rebellion and the short shrift which the natives were giving to the white men they captured. No one could furnish any reason for the uprising which seemed to me to hold water. It was only in later years, after I had become closely acquainted with the Matabeles through speaking the tongue of one of their tribes, that I appreciated the true significance of the rising. Many of the whites who had come into the country were working the natives at the point of the revolver and under the *shambo*, the wicked rawhide lash three or four feet long made of rhinoceros hide and consequently about an inch thick. One of these in the hands of a white driver would cut through the skin at a single blow and leave welts as big as rifle-barrels across the back. The natives became desperate and would no longer stand

for such treatment. As will be seen later, I worked hundreds of Makalakas and others of the Matabeles and never had a *shambo* in my hand.

When we reached Tati the place looked very different from what it would in ordinary times, as the few whites of the colony were gathered in an entrenched circle made of the big African trekking-wagons and sheets of corrugated iron. Within this they had been living for many days, not knowing at what moment the Matabeles would be on them. At the other stations along the post-route we had been able to secure provisions, but here we found the colony down to siege-rations.

Under pressure of the greater need of Bulawayo, we continued on past Tati, joined by some of the men from the mine. We were bearing north and then northeast to strike the Mangwe Pass over the Bulalima-Mangwe range when we came upon another circle of wagons—but there wasn't a soul alive within it! They were evidently a train of transporters who had been caught by the natives and scuppered to the last man. None of the animals were found. It made a grim impression upon us, especially when we saw how the dead had been mutilated. One man, found fastened to a near-by tree, had his ears and nose cut off. Some of the boys got a little jumpy, when they saw the ghastly sight; and all of us, no matter what sort of a front we put up, were looking back along the trail from time to time and wondering how long it would be before the

Irish Rifles would catch up with us. We were only about three hundred effective fighting men and we knew the thousands that the natives could put into the field. Also we all realized that it was at the pass that they would try to get us.

What kind of country was it? Not sandy, as much of the way had been, but very fertile with many animals about. You see, this valley lies some twenty degrees south of the equator and is fairly high, so that with good water it is ideal for animal life. Our two scouts whom we had thrown out in advance of the column kept constantly putting up antelope, deer and all sorts of game.

Suddenly they came galloping back to us to report that the natives were in force some miles ahead and that they had already been in touch with their advance outposts. They had seen great lines of them stretched across the valley. We deployed into an arrow-head formation with our pack-animals in the center and prepared for an attack.

In a little over an hour the Matabeles appeared and came on in what looked like endless waves. They were stark naked, not a single rag on them, unless you call the feathers and head-dresses which some of them wore an item of clothing. All of them carried the long leather shields common to this part of the country and the poisoned assagai. As they milled and swarmed round us, getting nearer and nearer looking for a weak point in the circular formation we had now been

forced to adopt, I could see that they carried bundles of these spears fastened to their left shoulders, while some of them had little boys as lance-bearers running beside them.

Finally, when their chiefs gave the command, they came yelling and shouting their war-cries, singing, dancing and jumping in a most unnerving manner. It seemed as though the whole continent of Africa had poured out its teeming millions to flow around us and then engulf us.

But the poor deluded souls reckoned badly on the powers of their medicine-men and their war-plumes, as well as on our tactics. Instead of waiting for them to rush us, we split off a small group—of which I was a member—that rode around them, firing into their ranks from a distance too great for them to reach us with their assagai. In view of the fact that they had to get within thirty or forty yards of us to throw their spears with any accuracy, we could keep just outside their range and use our revolvers on them with terrific effect. It was too lively riding to bring our Martini-Henry rifles into action, but our small arms drove group after group that we succeeded in isolating into panic and rout. It was a ghastly business and brought home to me the truth of Sergeant Bartholomew's warning that no good could come out of fighting with these natives.

Gradually we drove them back and saw them drawing off toward the pass. Then we had to camp, which

gave me a chance to go among the fallen blacks and examine their arms and shields. The assagai were all set in wooden shafts with two little wings of feathers like those on an arrow at the butt end to steady their flight. The shields were made from rhinoceros and other skins as well as from calabashes, that had been cut when green, flattened out and allowed to dry. These made a tough, resistant buckler, but pitifully inadequate for the white man's hurrying messenger of death.

To our great joy we soon made out a body of riders coming from the southwest and realized that it was at last the Irish Rifles. A few more thousands of those black warriors swarming around us, and it would have been too late. This Cape Town contingent would have found only a second circle like the one we passed in the morning. Their coming put heart in many who had been shaken by the sight of the mutilated transportmen and the welling hordes of Matabeles.

The moment the first greetings were over and they had pitched camp beside us, we sent out hunting parties to bring in meat. There were buffalo, antelopes, deer and other animals whose names I do not even know in English which went to make up the bag. Along the Tati there were plenty of water-plants, with their hollow stems carrying the liquid in purest form. Where you find these you can usually count on gorillas. Farther down the river there were known to be numerous colonies of them.

After breaking camp the following day we had gone forward but a few miles when we sighted another big band of blacks on the move. This time they did not fight, but only hung on our flanks and kept well ahead of us, evidently waiting for a good moment to strike. The day passed, however, without another battle. The second morning we continued to press on, for we did not know but that it might be a matter only of hours whether we should rescue the garrison at Bulawayo or find them but a second example of what the Matabele could do when roused.

And there was a man in the beleaguered place in whom South Africa was at that moment very much interested—Cecil Rhodes. He had been caught there, perhaps with the natives' knowledge and intention, when the rebellion broke.

That evening we came into the mouth of the pass but were forced to withdraw some distance and make camp, for the hillsides simply swarmed with blacks. With long-distance firing we kept them at bay till nightfall, and they never worried us after dark. They had no strategy for night attacks and, though they were fighting for a cause, they lacked the real courage of the white man when it came to close quarters.

Two days we spent in this way, going forward toward the pass in the morning and being compelled to retire again with the dark. The third day we decided to make a rush for it and charged the black masses that choked the pass and the slopes beside it. When

we came to grips with them, they used all sorts of knives and sharpened tools of many different patterns. Several of our men were killed and many wounded, but the blacks literally covered the ground by the thousands. The whole hillside was piled with their bodies. For several hours we shot till our rifles were too hot to hold, before we could drive them back. Whole new waves and then oceans of them seemed to come from somewhere above and bear down on us and overwhelm us in the human flood.

I was exhausted and sick of it all, when we finally saw them draw off and watch us from the ridges on the Bulawayo side, as we continued our march toward the beleaguered town. We had many wounded by the assagai to attend to. The doctors cauterized these wounds by searing them and then bound them up. But that was not what was bothering me so much as the reason for it all. I was not a Britisher and did not have to take a British view of the thing. True, white men were being besieged and would be murdered out of hand by the natives, unless we got through to save them. But why had it been necessary to carpet those hillsides with human beings, even though their skins were of a darker shade? What was farther behind it than just this danger of a besieged colony?

I had seen much of the rough side of life and had suffered no little during my boyhood and the years before the mast. Through it all I never found justification for the brutality that men believed necessary in

the governing of those who happened to be in their power, so that my mind turned readily to this problem of the native in Africa, one that was later to engross it deeply.

But it was no time to show any signs of what might be going on inside me. My mates would have laughed me out of the ranks, had I tried to air any of my "old-maid" views. I was big and powerful in those days and should not have had to take their jibes, but I never liked to use my strength to force my way of thinking on anybody. On the contrary, I was always hail-fellow-well-met with every one and never cease regretting the way the intervening years of hard knocks have now robbed me of much of the old-time geniality. I had many a close pal in those days who would bear me out in this.

On the second or third day after crossing the pass we arrived to relieve Bulawayo. What a welcome it was! What a shout went up as we came within earshot of the garrison! They were only three hundred seventy in all, practically without food, and had just driven off the last of several onslaughts of the black horde. Ammunition was running low. The moment that gave out, nothing could save them. The native dead were lying all over the roads and fields just where we entered the town, marking the scene of the last mad rush that failed.

But the blacks did not give up with our coming. Far from it. There were three or four more battles within

the next few days. Finally one morning, just with the coming of daylight, those on watch reported the natives moving in great masses. It was still too dark to distinguish clearly anything but the vague, misty surging of great lines that stretched away into the darkness.

As the light grew, the two machine-guns of the garrison and all the rifles were ordered into action. What we had seen in the pass was nothing in comparison with what now happened. Those dense bodies of shouting, crowding Matabeles with their shields and waving head-dresses came on in solid phalanxes. As one line went down, another came over it, only to fall with the next cruel sweep of the machine-guns. Their bodies lay four and five deep, before the rushes ceased. Then they circled the town and came on from another angle, only to find the gunners could outtravel them and repeat the terrible slaughter. With their dead and wounded heaped on the high plain, they withdrew and left us to wonder when the next crazed onslaught would be attempted.

The following morning brought an approach of a different sort. A single Matabele came across the plain with his hands raised, as a sign that he would parley. Rhodes, who had been directing the defence both before and after our arrival, had the man brought in and learned from him that Lo Bengula, "King of the Kings," desired to sue for peace.

The tribes in this part of Africa are mostly of Zulu

stock and have at their head an induna, or chief, who in turn looks up to the king of the group of tribes to which his may belong. Travelers passing through the country have to bargain with these indunas, giving them a piece of calico, a looking-glass, a weapon or some other trinket to win their favor, before asking for porters to carry supplies or men to work and hunt with them. I later found that almost invariably the first question the indunas asked of me, when I went to secure men, was:

"Will they be driven with the *shambo* or will they be treated right?"

What the natives had done to the settlers at the wagon-circle we came across west of the pass was not an uncommon occurrence in those days. They often scalped white men when they caught them alone. This, I found, was a purely retaliatory measure, because the majority of the whites in the country did not treat the natives as human being but as animals. McKinnon, who was later to be my partner and who, born in the country, spoke the language quite the best of any of the men in Bulawayo save Rhodes himself, was a good example of what I have just had the temerity to set down. He never would go to see an induna alone, and I later realized the reason for his fear.

With these facts partially accumulated, I was more than keen, when chosen as one of the twenty-five sergeants to form Rhodes' bodyguard, to hear the direct negotiations between this great leader in South

African business and political affairs and the King of the Kings.

Out we all rode from the beleaguered place, with the messenger of the natives loping along beside the Director of the Chartered Company of British South Africa who was at our head. Less than half a mile from the town we could see the little group of Matabeles that awaited us, about two hundred strong, with shields and spears at rest. Some distance back of them were hordes and hordes of their fellow-tribesmen, showing that we had by no means exterminated them, as the slaughter on the day before would have made one believe.

As we approached, a great tall figure of giant stature moved forward out of the band of blacks. It was Lo Bengula, six feet seven as he stood, naked except for a small fur skin that crossed his shoulder. He had a broad forehead and a most intelligent expression.

Rhodes dismounted and walked the last few paces. The head of the Matabeles came forward, raised his right hand well up in salute and hailed his visitor.

"Great Chief of the White Men!"

That much I could hear and understand. Rhodes answered him, speaking in Matabele without the intervention of an interpreter. The parley began. I caught, through my own knowledge and McKinnon's help, the drift of the complaint which Lo Bengula was making —that the natives had been badly treated but that they were overpowered and must submit. Rhodes re-

ceived their surrender with as fine feeling for them as any one could have shown and promised that the white men should cease their brutal tactics. He added that the garrison would overlook the attacks by the Matabeles and would cease firing, if the men would come back to work under the new conditions and behave themselves. Lo Bengula accepted, and that was the treaty of peace.

It was a dramatic moment for us in the bodyguard who watched this white dominator of the destinies of South Africa make peace in so simple a way with the leading king. This contact at Bulawayo was my first meeting with Rhodes, the man who had laid the foundation of his fortune in the diamond-fields of Kimberley, from which we of his guard had just come. He was one of the best speakers of the Zulu, Matabele, Mashona and Basuto tongues, as he had been constantly moving among the natives since the Zulu War of 1879-1881. He was neither proud nor arrogant toward us soldiers or toward any one, treated us on a fine basis of equality and was a thorough gentleman in all respects. Yet he had been a rough rider in his day, through times hard and good, so that he was no actor or poser.

Once the pledge of peace had been mutually given, Lo Bengula made a sign to his indunas that set all the group behind him and the long dark line stretching far toward either horizon back of them singing and dancing. Rhodes stepped forward and offered the King

his hand. Lo Bengula knelt as he took it, and the covenant was sealed. With that we mounted and rode back to the town, with Rhodes at our head and some paces in advance of the column.

We were no more than in the town and ready to be dismissed, when Rhodes realized that he should have asked Lo Bengula for men to help us clean up the carnage of the battle that was already polluting the place. He ordered us of the bodyguard to ride back and ask the King for his aid, promising that the men should be well paid for their work. McKinnon was directed to carry through the negotiations because of his intimate knowledge of the tongue.

Back we went, on our own as it were, and were met by one of the indunas, who detached himself from the group around Lo Bengula and asked what we wanted. On hearing our request, he took it to the King and returned at once with the message that we could have as many men as we needed. They were immediately selected from the force near-by and went back with us. In dealing with McKinnon the induna was polite and showed the best of disposition toward us whites, but there was none of the formality or ceremony that had been accorded Rhodes.

When we returned, we were informed that Rhodes had called a meeting for that afternoon in Market Square. As we gathered, he opened by saying that he wanted to direct his remarks and admonitions particularly to the miners, through whom this trouble had

arisen. Then he made good his promise to the Matabele chieftain to warn the white men against a continuance of their brutal treatment of the natives. And he made it as strong as words could. One could see that he was in deadly earnest and that he was putting every ounce of his weight of authority and manhood behind the command. And that, too, made me think. It was the strongest possible proof of where the real blame lay for the thousands of corpses that still dotted the plains!

There is also another small but very significant fact connected with that siege which bulks bigger now, when the personality of Rhodes and his endowments have come to mean so much to the world. Lo Bengula had planned his war with more strategy than the immense losses of his people would indicate. Just two machine-guns stood between that small group of white men and annihilation. The black leader either did not know of these or did not measure their power. Without them his hordes could certainly have rushed the rifles, which would have been hopelessly inadequate to drop enough of the oncoming mass to save them from the assagai. And so Rhodes would have probably gone with the rest—but for those two machine-guns!

As it was, his life was spared, and he soon left for the outside world in a special coach, with four or five of his staff and only two riders to guard him. Until he reached Tati he had to journey slowly, owing to the

disrupted post-service and the consequent lack of changes of horses.

Unfortunately the warning he had given the miners in his Market Square address seemed to have gone out with him. Their ingrained habits and their fear could not be changed in a day, not even by so sanguinary a lesson as the rebellion.

There was McKinnon, the very man Rhodes had chosen to negotiate with Lo Bengula for the men to help us clean up Bulawayo. He was employed by the Gwelo company and persuaded me to join him in their mine. One day when I saw him using his *shambo* on the men, I asked him:

"Do you remember what Cecil Rhodes told us in Market Square?"

"Yes, but you can't make the blacks work if you don't keep the fear of the *shambo* in them."

"Well, you wait and see," I retorted.

I buckled down to learning the Makalaka language with the determination that I'd show him and the others that the African could be treated like a human being and good results secured therefrom. I had seen too many bruisers of mates get into trouble with beating up their sailors not to know how silly it was. And I knew, too, that the men usually had the physical power on their side, just as the blacks did for at least the first stage of any serious trouble. So I talked with the men about everything I could think of, learned all the mining I could from McKinnon, with his

shambo-hook and holster on his belt, and applied my own methods to the task.

Under ordinary circumstances a black found sitting down was given a lash over the back. When I was running a drift or stoop into the rock, I used to place my men, tell them how many holes they had to drill and then say:

"Now you do this amount of work and you are free. You can sit down and rest." With the holes drilled, I used to take my little Kaffir boy, who carried my box of dynamite, put in my fifteen or twenty shots, twist the fuses all together and then wind a short piece around the ends of these longer lines. As one fuse ignites another much quicker than a match does, I would set them all going in this way, shoot the holes and tell the gang, when the gases had cleared, to go in with the truck and clean out the rock. In this way I not only had no trouble but always got as much work done as the old miners with their constant watching and lashing of the blacks.

I tell all this, not as a personal boast or as a personal matter, but just to exemplify the greater wisdom of Rhodes and to prepare the ground for my own conflict with the British idea of how the native of South Africa should be treated.

Returning to Bulawayo — there was evidence enough of the need and success of Rhodes' attitude in the way the men worked to help us clear up and rehabilitate. They were first given something to eat

and then divided into cleaning and foraging gangs. The latter went to work and soon brought in plenty of supplies. That was my initial experience in eating raw meat. McKinnon taught me by making a sandwich out of the first game he could get hold of. From then on I began to like it more and more and even when I came back to Sweden I really preferred a slice of it with onions and pepper to the ordinary filling for a sandwich.

Food had been very scarce with us during the last days of the siege. Sugar was up to three shillings sixpence a pound and other things in proportion. When word of the peace went forth, it was found that others had been much nearer starvation than we had. In some of the isolated places we found the blacks had run away and later come back a thousand strong to take vengeance on the whites and scalp them.

During those first days after the peace was made, we of the relief-column lived high. Nothing was too good for us. Though I had brought a fair amount of money with me, I could not spend a farthing of it. Whatever we wanted was ours for the asking. And there was a treasure-trove over the Mangwe Pass, for which we one day organised an expedition. In the fatal wagon-circle where we had first come upon the gruesome work of the natives, the Finn on the bucking broncho had discovered a fairly sizable shipment of liquor stowed under a load of galvanized iron on one of the wagons. Our captain, who was every inch a

soldier and whom we had to obey implicitly, gave us all at the time a small ration but made us leave the stock just where it was until the fighting was over. Then he allowed us to go back and bring it along to help the fun in Bulawayo.

It was during these days immediately following the relief that I also began to form a closer friendship with McKinnon. The manager of the Bulawayo Mining Concession wanted natives for starting up mining work again and asked McKinnon, because of his knowledge of the language, to ride to a near-by kraal in search of them. Everyone was a bit leery about entering the kraals just at this time, so that I had to offer to go along before McKinnon would take on the errand.

We used the regular tactics in winning over the induna. All the back-country tribesmen are very fond of seeing their own face, and only few of them possess even small pieces of looking-glass. So we gave the medicine-man a mirror and soon had all the workmen we wanted. Near the older settlements, where there has been more trade and contact, a mirror does not possess so much witchery.

In the course of this journey, McKinnon talked much about the opportunities in the Gwelo mine, which lay about one hundred miles to the northeast of Bulawayo, and suggested speaking to the manager about getting me a job there. His boss was an attractive type of man and made me a good offer. But all of that

meant giving up the return to Kimberley, to which I had been looking forward with so much impatience, as soon as this rebellion business should be settled. Yet, filled with the thought of what a thorough knowledge of mining could do for me in Africa, I handed in my resignation as a member of the Kimberley Police and wrote to Anna of all I hoped to accomplish through acquiring this experience in getting out gold. Our captain could not pay me off, as he had no funds for this, and urged me to return with the troop. But I was attracted by the future of the new country and told him I'd wait for my cheque until he could mail it to me from Kimberley. Two or three months later it came and helped to swell the sum which McKinnon and I were trying to save for a bigger venture.

Gwelo was at that time the extreme northern part of the white man's penetration of Matabeleland, just as Fort Salisbury was of Mashonaland. When the country had quieted down, some twenty of us set out with a caravan of nine or ten wagons to go to reopen the mine from which the staff had been withdrawn at the outbreak of the Matabele rebellion. So many of the company's oxen had been slaughtered for food that we could take only a part of their original outfit of wagons and had to move slowly. The natives along the route showed no unfriendliness whatever and seemed not to have any hesitancy in resuming the same relations that had existed before the fighting.

The mine was a well-developed one, with seven or

eight shafts, three general levels and all the drifts and stoops well timbered. But first we had to rig every available form of pump possible to remove the water. In less than a fortnight we were down to the first level and ready to begin cleaning out. Fortunately neither the stamp-mill nor any of the machinery had been injured by the blacks. Soon I was underground, learning every trick I could about quartz-mining. McKinnon was a master at the game and taught me rapidly.

But the work at Gwelo was not the most interesting part of the life at our mine, though we had a big stake in it. Our peculiar form of recreation was what I best remember of the months there. A kraal of Que Que tribesmen was located only fifteen or twenty minutes away by horseback, where McKinnon had a friend in an old medicine-man of whom he was very fond. He took me to the village, introduced me to the induna and soon had me started on their language. They were a division of the Gwelo clan, whose language differed considerably from that of the Makalakas and who proved a very friendly lot to be with.

They would dance and sing for us by the hour, accompanying themselves on their rude but pleasing stringed instruments and drums. They had the most childlike and easy-going natures. From their small plantations of vegetables and fruit and their hunting and fishing they had little trouble in gathering all the necessities of life, so that they were much more prone

to lie out under the trees than they were to accept work of any kind.

One of the fruits, if you can call it such, which they produced was a balsam apple, that looked like a short cucumber. They used it always for healing cuts and sores. This and many other peculiar remedies the medicine-man described to us during our long talks with him, squatting on the ground before his hut. They fished more than they hunted, as the latter—with their lack of firearms—required more skill and trouble in the construction of traps. Yet they always could produce a bit of game when a feast was on.

Their houses were all round and conical, with the bamboo or other poles of which they were made fastened to a ring at the top. The pole was then covered over, and the sides plastered with mud. Fires were always made in the open, so that there was no need for a chimney opening.

They had a fermented drink, called *juala*, of which they were very fond. It was made of various fruits and was most refreshing, resembling somewhat a heavy beer. In it they put some fruit or vegetable substance that made it thick, almost like a potato soup. At first I used to strain this out and take only the clearer liquid, but later I learned to like and drink it just as the natives did and found it very nourishing. It was potent, too, so that many of our week-ends in the kraal had a rather lively touch added to the usual discussions with the induna and the dances of the tribe.

During the many weeks of frequent visits to this kraal we were in close touch with much of the native life. As we always had our meals with them, we came to know their food and their habits of eating quite as our own. The induna and all the others usually ate squatting on their haunches, most of them apart by themselves. In this they were quite like the Chinese, whom I had observed going off with their bowls of rice and sitting in a corner with their backs toward the others in their group, as though there was something in the mere act of eating that should be kept hidden from onlookers.

All during these days in Matabeleland, both now and later, I learned also to eat the *belton*, or jerked meat, which is so universally found in the country. For roasting this the natives use forks fastened to long handles and hold the meat out over the open fire until it is sufficiently cooked. They had spoons also, though these were largely of wood, with but a few iron ones. One article of the black metal that always interested and bothered me considerably was their pipe. It was small, was shaped like an acorn and grew uncomfortably hot. We always ate in the open in front of the huts. Although most of them were so smelly that the average white man could not have stood them while eating, we did have to take refuge in them for sleeping to guard ourselves against the dampness and dews that were so apt to bring on fever.

Practically every time we turned up at the kraal,

they welcomed us with a war or other type of dance, when the young men decked themselves out in feathers and head-dresses and carried their shields and spears. As salt is a very valuable article among the natives, we won much favor by taking them some almost every time we made a visit. I cannot say whether the really wild tribes had regular supplies of this necessity or not. They certainly did not produce any themselves. All that I ever heard of in the Matabele country came in from over-seas.

Among the most interesting features of the kraal life were their marriage customs and ceremonies. When a man accumulated a little money, enough to buy the necessary number of cows which he would have to pay for a wife, he bargained with the induna of a neighboring branch of the tribe and turned the animals over to him. These never went to the bride's father but always to the induna of the tribe to which the family belonged. On the night of the wedding, the groom had also to furnish a calf, whose warm blood was drunk as part of the ceremony carried on by the medicine-man. The latter might be the induna or not. They always have their great medicine-men, who teach them religion and treat them for their physical ills as well.

In later years I ran across many natives who were unusually industrious and worked so consistently for the whites that they accumulated a few extra sovereigns. With these they would often buy an extra wife.

Through the years in Matabeleland I saw many Makalaka and other tribesmen with their two or even three households living on apparently the best of terms, without any outward sign of jealousy. The man almost always erects another little pepper-box of a house when he brings home a new wife.

In our kraal the natives never took exception to our being at any of their feasts or ceremonies. On the contrary they often invited us when a wedding or other unusual celebration was on. Nor did they seem to mind our presence during their religious exercises. The medicine-men taught them what little they had of religion. They had gods carved out of wood which they worshipped. Others knelt and prayed to the sun. During our many talks with the induna I tried to explain our faith, but did not get very far, I am afraid.

The primitive simplicity of these blacks and their real kindliness toward us made a very deep impression on me, after I had seen the slaughter and the hatred of the Matabele rebellion. The problem of the natives and their real attitude sank deep into my African life and gave me much to ponder over. In later years I found that both the Matabeles around Bulawayo and the Makalakas in the Tati district were much more hostile toward the whites than our Que Que kraal and the Mashonas, among whom I also spent some time during my stay at Umtali. I felt more and more convinced that it was the *shambo* which made the natives hate the white man and take scalps on

many occasions. In several kraals I later visited there were white scalps plainly displayed. The first time I saw them, the sight gave me the creeps and made me ask:

"Would you scalp me, if you got a good chance?"

"No," the induna answered, "you are a good white man, and good white men we do not scalp."

In order to help protect my scalp, as well as for companionship, while I was in Africa I practically always had a dog of some kind or another. At one period I had a big brown and white Newfoundland, of whom I was very fond. I bought him from a Boer farmer. These traveling-mates of mine had no end of battles to fight with the native dogs around the kraals, most of which were of the greyhound type.

Also—something to which I never became quite reconciled all my years in Africa—there are packs of wild dogs of this same greyhound species, which can run down almost any of the animals upon which they prey, and are a bad lot for a man to go up against, especially if they happen to be prowling in force.

I had all I wanted of this feature of them in a brush we had during later years while I was in Mashonaland. Three or four of us went out one morning from Umtali for a ride over the plain, that stretched away for twenty miles. As we were reaching a small bit of cover, one of my companions turned suddenly back and called to me:

"Charlie, you'd better run for it. There's a pack of wild dogs just ahead!"

Never having previously come into contact with the wild variety, and being in a jocund frame of mind, I replied to my fleeing companion:

"I can get along with any dog! Let's go up and pet them." But that was the last time I took a wild dog so lightly, for there was a dozen of them coming for us with the fury of a pack of wolves. In a flash I was following my companion at full gallop, but that was not fast enough. They were gaining on us every second. As it was a Sunday morning when we had gone out, merely for a pleasure ride, we were carrying only revolvers, so that we had to let them get up uncomfortably close before we opened fire. We dropped two of them, which halted part of the pack to feed on their wounded fellows.

But there were others now that came up out of somewhere to swell the savage group to nearer two dozen. We rode for it as hard as we could go, until the horses were quite played out, turning back and shooting from time to time, until finally we had rolled over enough of their own number to keep them all engrossed in their ghastly banquet. The natives told us that there were many in that region and that they always hunted in packs like wolves. If we had not been armed, they could easily have outrun our horses and would probably have made short shrift of us.

McKinnon and I one day did our Que Que kraal

such a great favor, without knowing it, that they ever remained our sworn friends. The old medicine-man had complained to us that "the elephant"—as though there were but one in the whole country—was doing much damage, trampling down their vegetables and fruit. We thought little more of this until one day when we had gone for a swim. We heard a crashing noise up the steep hillside that formed the river-bank at that point and saw some great stones come tumbling down through the brush. Then out of the trees appeared a tusker that walked calmly down, almost on top of us in the hiding-place we had scurried to in the grass.

We had our rifles, which we usually carried, but did not dare to fire at the great hulking beast while he was so close, as we feared wounding him and having to withstand a charge. When he had finished drinking, he squirted water from his trunk all over himself and then lumbered away up the hill. That gave us our chance, but we did not know where to place our shots to have them effective.

"I'm trying for behind the ear," I remember saying to McKinnon.

"We'll have to do something quick, or he'll be out of range." So we aimed and fired. The only effect seemed to be that he pricked up his great ears and traveled a little faster. We fired again for the same spot, then once or twice more. It looked as though he were not going to take any notice of us, when sud-

denly he keeled over and began rolling back down the steep slope, crashing through the trees and setting the rocks rolling.

As we were nearer the Que Que kraal than the works, we went along to the village to ask the induna for help to take the ivory. He sent a full hundred men with us. When we had finished removing the tusks and gave them the great carcass as their share of the plunder, they danced for joy. That night and many days thereafter the kraal feasted high on elephant-steaks and never ceased to bless us for the double gift we had made them.

CHAPTER VIII

The Thirst for Gold—and for Water!

OUR intimate friendship with the natives of our Que Que kraal and the goodwill this incident brought us stood us in fine stead, when we eventually reached our goal of saving £500 apiece. Our incentive to accumulate came from a mere coincidence. Both McKinnon and I were fond of swimming and used to go down to the river every afternoon after work was over for a dip before our evening meal. We liked diving also and vied with one another to see how deep we could go. One day we brought up some sand from the bottom over ten feet down and found, to our intense excitement, that it was full of gold. Then we dived time and again at different spots, some places reaching a depth of twelve or fourteen feet, and always with the same result.

That set us to thinking and scheming. We bunked together in a small room in the big barrack-like building for the white staff. We talked late in the evenings and planned it all out that, the moment we could each save the necessary stake, we would buy an outfit and begin operations on the river. McKinnon was older than I—somewhere beyond thirty—quiet and canny

as a Scotchman should be. He warned me against saying a word to anybody, so we worked and hoped in silence, diving more and more and never failing to verify our first find.

In due course we had our £1,000 between us and set out for Bulawayo, the nearest place where the supplies which we needed could be found. First we laid in a stock of copper plates and many jars of quicksilver solution to spread on them for catching the gold. Then we added spikes, strap-clamps, axes, shovels, other necessary tools, ammunition and provisions—everything that we might need for months in the country. For transport we bought horses to ride and mules and donkeys to pack our outfit.

There was another item in our kit which is so distinctively African and so different from the usual type that it deserves more than a word. This was our water-carrying equipment. In all this part of Africa the traveler "packs" his water in square canvas bags, anywhere from twelve to twenty inches in size and made, as I remember them, from ordinary sail-canvas. Sometimes they are double but more often only of a single thickness. The side and top seams are carefully and strongly sewn, while a hole is let into the top for the cork. Carrying-handles of the same material make them look like an ordinary school-bag.

The water is not only perfectly held by the swelling of the fibres in the cloth but also—and what is much more important—is kept quite cool, even in the hot-

test sunshine, by the slight evaporation which takes place through the canvas. The same effect of drawing the heat from the liquid inside is produced in China by porous porcelain jars and in India by hanging a bottle in a woolen stocking in the wind and wetting it from time to time.

In a country where water plays so important a rôle in the life of the traveler as it does in Africa, its transportation is a most vital problem. In the caravans you can always count on finding two canvas bottles attached to the saddles of the riders and rows of them hanging underneath the wagons.

With our kit complete we went to the kraal of the Que Ques and received from the induna all the men we wanted, each one pledged to stand by us to the end. Then we set off down the Gwelo in search of a place where the river would be shallow enough for us to throw a dam across it. For days we trekked without finding the stream-conditions for which our eyes were straining. Time and again we dived, always verifying our first discovery of the rich sands. Each evening as night fell, we invariably had a driving desire to go on just a bit further to see what lay below, for we knew that all we needed to give us an assured fortune was the right depth in that stream.

Day after day passed, and still we trekked. It was summer—though I cannot remember the exact month—and the heat was so great that we could move only in the morning and the late afternoon. Finally we

found ourselves at the confluence of the Gwelo with the Shangani. What would the combined waters spell for us? The prospect of their added volume was far from encouraging, yet we could do nothing but continue the search, for we had neither the power nor the equipment to work where the water was of so great a depth.

Another difficulty faced us.

Our progress was checked from time to time by the problem of bearers. The Que Que men whom the induna had commanded to stay with us could not break the time-hardened customs of the land that practically forbade members of one tribe to cross the territory of another. As soon as we came into the Shangani country they notified us that the tribe was not friendly to them and, though they did not desert us, they practically gave us an ultimatum by saying that we should have to go to the chief for a parley.

The head of the Shanganis said that they had lost a great many of their brothers in the war and that they would not work for white men again. The river, with its bountiful supply of fish, gave them a living, so that they were not forced to seek further gain elsewhere. But after two days of our best diplomacy and our bribe of a pound a month for each man, the induna finally yielded and gave us porters, who took up the swags of our Que Que bearers and left them free to return home.

What did we feed these men? Crushed corn was practically the only thing you had to give a native porter, with a supplementary ration of meat twice a week. All the time we were in Matabeleland we never paid a cent for this meat, inasmuch as we shot game enough for every one. No, there was not much of what you could call sport in the hunting, as the animals just stood and looked at you in surprise. They were not frightened, because the natives had no firearms and but poor chance of taking them otherwise.

In all we traveled thus for about four weeks before we came to any place that even approximated our requirements. Again we crossed the frontier of a new group of tribes and had to go through the same process of securing local porters. We had already come well down the Shangani toward the Zambezi and found the speech of the tribesmen quite different from the Makalaka with which we were familiar. McKinnon could not make head or tail of their jargon at first, though they seemed to understand him.

At last we managed to get ten of them to accompany us and let the others go back. It was only a few days later that we came to what looked like sufficiently shallow water. Could we wade it all the way across? That was the test the stream must meet, if we were to be able to throw a dam across it with our primitive methods. Into it we went—and came out on the other bank. Now for work!

First we hurried one of the new men back to get ten

more of his fellows from the induna to swell our labor force. This messenger returned alone. I immediately started back with him, leaving McKinnon at work felling trees and assembling them by the river-bank. The poor black fared badly through my enthusiasm to get on with the task, now that the gold was within our very grasp, for he had to run alongside my horse. I carried an old revolver with me and drew it out just at the psychological moment in the negotiations, telling the induna that he could have it, if he would but give me ten more men. My demands proved modest. I could have had a hundred. He nearly hugged me as it was.

Those twenty men worked with McKinnon and me for nearly three weeks, cutting down the trees, dragging them to the river and helping us build the dam. Our working-plan was this. We put in two lines of piling about four or five feet apart, using for this purpose trees from three or four to six or seven inches in diameter. For a good part of the river's width of something around one hundred fifty feet, the depth ranged between our knees and hips. Here the piles could be of lighter material. To sink the timbers we had to "bump" them with the heaviest logs in a very awkward manner. Once down we bound them together with the bolts and strap-clamps which we had packed all the long route and then lined them with more trees and brush running horizontally. To hold these in place the men carried load after load of rocks and finally dirt to

bring the level up to just a bit above that of the stream.

In order to save our work from constantly washing away, we naturally had to leave sluice-openings to be filled at the last moment. There were four of these, two of them flanking the middle sections of the dam, which we made slightly lower than the side lengths, as it was over this center part that we wished to direct the stream's flow. On the down-river side of this segment we erected sloping frames, into which we fitted the copper plates. We had an unbroken line of thirty-five feet of these. They had to be so arranged that they could be easily slipped out and changed.

The simple theory of our structure was that, as the sluices were finally filled, the sand which the river was constantly carrying down would lodge behind our dam and gradually build up the bottom until it was level with the top of the lowest section. Then the water would flow over this and carry most of the stream's burden of sand and alluvial gold over our copper plates.

One day all was finally in readiness. We closed the last hole through which "the wealth of the Indies" was going to waste during every precious hour of the day and night. Would the bottom rise as we expected and would the dam hold? All worked out just as we calculated. It remained only to brush the plates with the quicksilver solution and put them in place.

That was a wild day, watching the little patterns of

the tiny flakes of gold grow up across the plates, here in points, there in great swelling curves and on another in an almost unbroken straight line. And it was gold, the purest form of gold! McKinnon was an old enough hand at the business to know that it was coming in unbelievable quantities. Soon we were scraping the plates, drying them, recoating and resetting. Once the rhythm was established we had all we could do just to make the round of the plates before the first ones attended to were ready for a second scraping.

You know that after a certain amount has accumulated on the quicksilver, it lets any additional flakes pass over, so that there is a point at which it is most economical to scrape and recoat. Sometimes the flakes will adhere a thirty-second, or even a sixteenth of an inch thick, but practically never much beyond this.

Yes, we kept the gold and quicksilver together, as we had not the equipment for firing a crucible and separating them.

As compared with the dust and nuggets of quartz-mining, the alluvial flake-gold is purer and brings a higher price. We knew that the quotation was running somewhere around four pounds eight or ten shillings per ounce.

That first day we scraped for between eight and ten hours after the stream began running over the plates and the bottom of the river was well up to or near the dam's level. In the late afternoon a rain set in and

drove us to shelter. While we squatted there on the banks of *our* Shangani, perhaps the farthest inland of any white miners at that time, we had no trouble at all building castles that would have made the Bank of England look sick. As it was, we did not have even so much as a hut over our heads, because it was the dry season and we had been too busy with other and more important construction-work to worry about a roof for ourselves. We had simply been living under the trees and bushes.

When the shower turned to a steady rain, we called the day good enough for a starter and got under cover for the night. We should probably have a foot of gold on every one of those plates in the morning!

But some djinni in the mountains worked a magic on us. He must have managed a cloudburst, for when the next morning came, there was not a plate or a piece of our dam in sight. Why hadn't we had the sense to lift those precious sheets of copper? We were dumb and sick over it all! Locking the stable door after the horses had been stolen was poor consolation in our case, as the nearest supply of that particular brand of animal was hundreds of miles and weeks away. How could we have been so stupid? All we could do now was to sit on the bank and swear, as we watched those pounds of gold flow softly down toward the Zambezi and the ocean, where they could do nothing except—it was no time to jest. A revolver-shot might have been the answer to a poor joke. We

were sick over it all and did nothing the first day but mope around and curse our luck.

Finally a decision came after we had pulled ourselves together sufficiently to discuss matters. McKinnon had progressed enough with the men's language to make them understand that we would be back again and that now we must bury all our quicksilver, tools, spare spikes, clamps and everything not required on the fast journey out to Gwelo. They were to keep them in trust for us until we could return. And here I would remark in passing that this was no unusual confidence to repose in them, for the natives, as we knew them, were the most dependable and honest folk you could ask to meet. We always trusted them and never had occasion to regret it.

In a day or two we were off. This time the tribesmen whom we kept with us as porters told us that we had come by a needlessly circuitous route and that they would take us back by a much more direct trail. At this time we had still four horses, six mules and six donkeys. Starting overland, we did not strike water the first day, as we were scheduled to, so that we had to camp that night without being able to give the animals anything to drink. We still had some in our canvas bottles for ourselves, but none that we felt we could spare for the poor beasts.

That looked serious enough, but it did not occur to us that the guides were not absolutely familiar with their country and that we should have to face any

grave shortage of water. So we made the animals go forward this second day through the sandy country into which we had been led. That night, when we dismounted and left the horses standing for a moment, as was our usual custom, they suddenly threw up their heads, gasped, looked wild-eyed and crazed and broke away at a gallop. It was a pitiful sight and not too quieting to our now-straining nerves. They had our saddles and some of the precious water-bags on them. We felt sure they had smelled or sensed water and would come back, once they had drunk their fill. It gave us hope for a bit, knowing how the animal instinct is often the surest guide in the desert. Mine was an especially fine little mount that I did not want to lose.

But they did not return that night nor the next morning, nor all the next day, which we spent lying there waiting for them. By that time our own supply had given out and the mules and donkeys had all been without a drop for three full days. The following morning we sent out half of the natives to try to find some of the precious liquid. When they failed to return, we mounted the mules and pushed on as far as their strength lasted. On the second day of this form of travel the mules lay down and would not move.

Desperate, we again despatched one-half our remaining force of natives to comb the desert, while we stopped at this point to dig in search of some underground source. We had constantly used our test-

pumps to no avail. These, you know, are small pointed pipes with holes in the cone-shaped end, which we press down into the sand as deep as we can and then work the valve located close to the bottom of the tube. Our digging and our testing brought nothing but sand.

None of the men came back, either the first sixteen or the second eight, nor did we have any word of the horses. It was now nearly two days since any of us had tasted a drop. We decided to send out two more of the remaining eight natives, and then just sat ourselves down and waited, wondering how long we could last. The animals were down all around us in pitiful condition, while the natives squatted in fear. They had managed, while we were still among the scrub, to chew some leaves that kept down the thirst a bit; but I did not dare to follow their example for fear of the many poisonous plants in the valley.

My tongue had swollen to such a size that I could not close my mouth nor speak with any distinctness. McKinnon was little better off. We had seen enough of water but a few days previous to sicken us; now one single cupful of that flood would have almost bought our gold.

Was this to be the end of our discovery of the gold-bearing sands of our treasure-river? Would none of the blacks come back? Had we nothing to do but sit and wait for the demon of thirst to drive us mad? We could kill the animals, but their blood might not

keep us going long enough for us to find our way out. That seemed only the last resort. What then? But the question was suddenly answered. The two blacks were returning, and they were walking rapidly! That meant good news—that they had already drunk!

As they drew closer we could see they carried a calabash. And it was water, real water, not the thing of which we had dreamed and found non-existent when we opened our eyes! We drank. I took but a cupful and immediately had pains in my stomach. So I stopped and urged McKinnon to be moderate too. But he couldn't. I remember saying to him:

"Be careful, man, you're going to hurt yourself drinking that way." But the warning did no good, and he just flooded himself with the marvelous fluid. My tongue felt as big as an apple, though it subsided a bit as I took additional sips.

The two blacks told the others where the water was, so we sent them off with the animals. Two mules refused to rise and had to be left where they lay. The rest all reached the hole which the searchers had made in a little stream they found trickling out of a hillside. McKinnon developed terrible pains and was unable to move. I did all I could to relieve him, but that was practically nothing. He suffered agonies and then, to add the crowning sorrow to our venture, he died, only five or six hours after he had taken what he thought was going to be life-giving fluid.

Such a night I never passed in my life, and I hope

never to have another like it. I sat beside him there in the sand, weeks away from any place where another white man could be found to mourn his going or share the blackness of my own sorrow. The next day we dug him down. My life had not made of me a praying man, yet I did my best by him. I marked his grave down by the big rock beside which we buried him.

Depressed and alone I went on to where the water was and lay there several days, to give the men and animals a chance to pick up from the effect of the long thirst. Our supplies of food began running so low that I finally was forced to order a move forward. The country was more fertile here, offering pasture and water. Two days of marching brought us to a native kraal. With the chief of that tribe I left everything that did not appear to be absolutely necessary, secured three men to accompany me and, all of us mounted on the remaining mules, set off for the Que Que kraal. We had only a spade, an axe and guns, besides the absolutely necessary articles of my kit and our food.

It was a sad entry into the native village where McKinnon had taken me to meet the wise old induna, and a sadder one at the mine where he had been known as one of their best men. I passed on to Bulawayo, where I sold my transport-animals and took coach for Mafeking, following the road over the Veldt in a different spirit from that in which I had gone up it with the Diamond Field Horse.

The journey out gave me an opportunity to learn more intimately some of the details of this rather ancient method of travel. It took us some seven or eight days, with the animals galloping a good part of the way. The teams, I found, were largely made up of big, strong mules, and the changing-stations were most crude affairs. There was an enclosure for the animals and some small sheds, and that was all, as I remember them. If we did not happen to arrive at one of the proper rest-houses, which were sometimes one hundred miles apart, we simply rolled up in our blankets and slept on the ground beside the coach. We always had camp-fires burning to keep off any marauding beasts of prey and took turns standing watch over them.

Yes, as I recall it, the road was fairly well beaten down, as there were frequent transport caravans moving over it. These trains were rather large during the disturbed days following the rebellion, as the transport men were the first to feel the blast of native uprisings and had to provide their own protection against this danger. In many cases whole companies of them were robbed, murdered and scalped.

How did the gold go out? It was generally sent from Bulawayo and the other mines by the coaches, with a mounted guard of two or three men. My own supply I carried in my swag and found, when I reached Cape Town, that it netted just fifty-four ounces. My cheque was for something around £250, I can't remember

the exact amount now. But it was not the amount that counted for me then; it was the knowledge of the exact place in which I had taken it and the short single working day in which the crude line of copper plates had collected it out of the hurrying water. Those were the salient facts in my mind, as I accepted the cheque which represented all the visible returns of our sad expedition.

CHAPTER IX

Trekking Over the Veldt

THOSE were sad days for me, for they saw the loss of both the best man-friend I had ever had and of the growing friendship with Anna, which I had so persistently dreamed—during those last days at Kimberley—would ripen into a much more intimate relationship. As a member of the local police force and of a group of townspeople that led a normally monotonous existence, I was becoming regularized and was being fitted into the mold of the convention, which would have prepared me for the uneventful life of the town.

Then came the rebellion and all of the changes which that long march into the vast and romantic north and the fighting with the natives brought about in my mind. I knew afterwards that the fault was mine, though at the time I didn't realize how meager and infrequent my letters were becoming. With the work in the mine and then the feverish preparation and enthusiasm for our expedition to add to the long weeks we were beyond the reach of anything vaguely resembling a postal courier, it was little wonder that

I failed to hold the attention of my Kimberley riding-companion.

When I next saw her, my neglect was given its sentence and I was sent away into the life of the new Africa I had come to know with practically every human tie cut and not a soul on earth to care what happened to me—the best and practically the only preparation for the type of life which I was now to lead. Yet I would defend myself against any tendency to believe that this hardened me or made me less considerate of my fellow-men. I was always too good-natured and warm-hearted for that. I had still a fight or two to win through, as will be later seen, but my pugnacious sailor days were becoming a thing of the past.

After my realization of the loss of Anna out of my life, my one thought was how best to capitalize the knowledge and the practical test of the new find which McKinnon and I had made.

I constantly had visions of a big rush north into the valleys of the Gwelo and the Shangani, but I did not intend to let any one know a word about the location of the rich sands until I had thoroughly protected myself in the new company that I was sure would soon be formed. So I started cautiously to feel my way among the men of Cape Town who had money to invest.

First I took up quarters in the Sailors' Home, so as not to arouse any suspicion or curiosity. Gradually

I secured a hearing with the representative of a group of men with sufficient means to back such an undertaking as I had in mind and began negotiations with them. I pointed out that an initial caravan of four or five wagons would be necessary to haul the supplies and provisions and finally indicated the number of weeks it would take to reach the place from Mafeking. The north was large, so that this much of definiteness would not rob me of my stream of gold. There were plenty of scalawags in South Africa in those days, and I did not intend to be euchred out of the benefits of our hard-bought knowledge.

We bargained and dickered over the terms until finally we were just on the point of signing, when my would-be backers insisted, before they would close the deal, on knowing the exact location to which we were going. It didn't look right to me, so I walked out on them, preferring to keep my secret rather than risk it in their hands before I had something tangible to show for it. I figured that I could soon get together capital enough with what I already had to outfit a new expedition and find a partner to go in with me.

That, remember, was thirty-five years ago, when I was but a youngster. Up until now I have spoken very little about my African experiences and have almost never mentioned this expedition with McKinnon. But the Shangani is still there and is probably rolling down as much gold as it was in my day. I wouldn't go back myself now, nor would I want my boys to go,

because of the fever and disease that infest the Zambezi and the adjoining valleys. Yet there it is for those who wish to try.

When the negotiations with the first group of men failed and I was beginning to look about for another, an unexpected incident took me out of Cape Town with that speed which indicates reason enough for the going. Anyway, I was sobered down a bit those days, especially after McKinnon's loss, and found that the life of the port did not offer the attractions of earlier years. I wanted the back-country again, the places near the gold-fields and real work. It was nothing that *I* had done which hurried me away. I had become acquainted with a Finn named Lind at the Home and had taken a liking to the boy—for that's all he really was. One night he got into a scrap and stabbed a man. It looked to me as though the fault was not on his side, so I took pity on the lad and said to him:

"You're going to get into a peck of trouble now. I'm tired of Cape Town myself. If you do just as I tell you, I can probably save your skin." He did, and we were on the train late that night rolling off toward the north.

When we struck the railhead at Mafeking, we put up in a little hotel near the station to give us time to look around and plan the next move. There I met a man, named Brown, who was going north with a transport-caravan to Tati. He was quite a different char-

acter from most of the men in this business, since he was the son of a wealthy father who had sent him out from England to keep him from squandering all the family wealth. A remittance man? Yes, I think that's what they called those fellows. But don't misunderstand me. He was every inch a gentleman. I liked him from the very outset, though he was a greenie and couldn't speak a word of the native language.

Most transport-men charge you a fee to go along with the caravan, but he was looking for a companion, especially one who knew Kaffir and could help him out with the blacks.

"Have you teams?" he asked me.

"No, I am going to buy a horse and ride to Tati."

"I have three brand-new outfits and am taking up loads of sheet-iron that will pay me well. But I need help. Come along with me."

And so the bargain was struck. I told him about Lind, whom he also agreed to take along as handyman during the trip.

What were the wagons like? Oh, they were quite different from any I have ever seen elsewhere. They were great long things—I hardly dare give a definite figure—with an overhang aft that must have brought them to somewhere between twenty and thirty feet. You know the Boers, who formed the bulk of the transporters of those days, used to live on board the poop, which must have been eight or nine feet wide, as it carried two beds with a table between them.

Amidships it was shaped like a great hay-wagon, with sloping sides and wings extending out over the wheels.

But the teams were even more unusual. Every wagon had twenty-four pairs of oxen, the first fastened to the tongue for steering and the others hitched along a strong chain. Moreover, no transport-man ever counted on going into the veldt without at least three wagons in his caravan, as it was necessary, whenever one of these heavy wains went down into loose sand or bogged in soft ground, to hitch all three teams on this dreadnought among prairie-schooners to haul it out.

When the Boers traveled with their families they usually moved in companies of a dozen or more wagons for mutual protection. Very often some isolated tribe or kraal rose in momentary rebellion or just for a raid on the passing merchandise. Against this they had to be ready to defend themselves.

No, I never made mental note of the exact weight of the loads, although I know how dishearteningly heavy they appeared to be when we had them down in the soft ground.

The drivers were usually natives, one on the wagon with a short whip to reach the pole-span and another running beside the long string of animals with a huge lash that he cracked over their backs. A third walked ahead as leader of the team.

The traveling hours were always in the morning,

as soon as the light permitted, and the latter part of the afternoon on into the evening. When there was a moon, we would start earlier in the morning or carry on later at night. But we never moved very late on account of the lions. They prowl at night in search of food, but seldom stir about much by day.

The moment the bargain with Brown had been struck, I bought myself a good riding-horse at the rather high figure of £40. Everything was high in those days just after the Matabele rebellion, for there was a big gold-rush on toward the north and a boom in all sorts of property and other business that sent prices to the skies. But Brown had money enough and did not hide the fact. He laid in a good supply of whisky for "medicinal and convivial purposes." Well-bred and college-trained, he was quite different from the ordinary type in the country and needed help if he was to get through safely.

But I did not imagine that the need would come so soon. We were only a little over a week out when we reached Lobatsi, a station with a big rest-house and a few huts around it. There we met a Norwegian of some forty or forty-five years, who saw Brown drinking a good bit and fell to talking with him. Our boss had not been on the veldt as long as some of us and had not learned the necessity of keeping things to himself. I was carrying on me all the wealth I had in the world at that moment, but I didn't let any one else know it. Always careful of my money, I had still about

£500 after cashing in the gold at Cape Town and carried every cent of this in a belt under my shirt.

When the Norwegian asked permission to join our caravan, Brown readily consented. At the end of our first stage of some four or five miles the Norwegian began talking to Lind about an easy way of getting together some capital between them, pointing out to him the value of the fine outfit Brown had and the cargo aboard. Lind repeated the story to me in a way that made me realize I had helped the wrong kind of a man. He was evidently ready to join the Norwegian in putting Brown out of the way and expected me to go along. To be sure of not getting trapped myself, while Brown had ridden back to have some more drinks in the saloon at Lobatsi I pretended to sympathize with the idea and drew him on.

"You've just got out of one scrape by the skin of your teeth. You want to be careful now about how you take on another," I said to him, without indicating clearly just what I was going to do. I was now awfully sorry I had helped the fellow at the risk of my own standing and began to think how I could stall their game. Lind had a gun and so did I, but I always carried mine in my belt, while I knew that his was up on the wagon. So I got him away with the Norwegian under some pretence or other and took the chance to slip up and bag his weapon. But the Norwegian still had his, so that I was not easy in my mind.

This was all between two and three in the after-

noon. Four was our usual starting time. Brown was still back at the saloon. I jumped on my horse, while the others were occupied, and rode off into a little wood near-by. Once out of sight, I swung round through a big circle and galloped for Lobatsi. As I rode into the station, Brown was just coming out of the saloon, good and drunk. I dropped off my horse and said to him:

"Brown, I want you to sober up. There is something brewing, something dangerous. You've got to be on your guard and ready for it."

"What is it?" he asked, with a show of fear.

"Lind has told me the Norwegian has things in his head that may cost you your life. So now sober up and stand by me, shoulder to shoulder. You've been a gentleman to me, and I don't want to see you trapped by these skunks. But you've got to keep your head."

He looked as though the idea went home, as he turned white and set his face hard. We mounted and rode along the trail. When we were still some distance from the wagons, I left him and circled around through the wood to come into the camp from the other side and thus avoid arousing suspicion. I got in first according to a prearranged plan and asked if Brown had arrived.

"Where have you been?" Lind asked.

"For a ride along the river," I answered with perfect truth. Brown soon came into sight and appeared

ready for his part of the game. We carried out our plan of coming close together and then suddenly drew our revolvers and covered the Norwegian. It was the work of but a second to relieve him of his gun. It came so quickly that neither he nor Lind guessed our move. We didn't string the fellow up, as he deserved, because he had not yet committed the overt act; but we sent him back on foot to Lobatsi with the warning that we would mark him down for anyone else traveling the road and that he had better get out of the country, if he wanted to keep the joints in his neck close together.

With that incident behind us we trekked on in a frame of mind which brought Brown and myself closer together and left Lind as an unwelcome outsider in our caravan. I was the next to furnish a little break in the monotony of our ox-speed journey. We followed down the valley of the Notuani to the Limpopo. It was our custom to go for a dip every day to refresh ourselves after the dust and heat of the road. The Notuani gave us little satisfaction, however, other than the bath, as the water was too shallow for enjoyable swimming. When we came to the Limpopo, we took advantage of the first stop to splash in and have a good long swim. At this point the river was some hundreds of yards wide, a nice swimming distance. I had crossed it and was just coming to shallow water, when I looked back and saw that the other two were not following—but that something else was, and

I bolted for the shore. Before I landed, Mr. Crocodile had scratched my leg and given me a good scare, no matter what his intentions may or may not have been.

And there I was on the south shore of the Limpopo, with the caravan the other side of that uninviting water. Throughout the whole of the day I paraded down the bank, dressed in true native style, until we came to the next station, which was fortunately within striking distance. It was already toward dusk and quite cool when I arrived at the southern end of a little foot-bridge set on piles and made my way across to the wagons and my clothes. That was my single attempt to usurp the rôle of the natives.

Farther to the north, near Palachwe on the Lotsani, we had a different experience. One morning we were going down for an early dip. The sun was very hot. We saw a huge hippopotamus wallowing around just at the edge of the water. We sent Lind back to the wagons for our rifles. With these in hand all three of us fired at once without seeming to disturb the animal perceptibly. Then we let go again and finally drove the great beast into the shallow water, where he fell. Brown was thrilled at having secured such a fine head and set about getting it off. We worked a large part of the day before we finally had it on one of the wagons, where it reached almost from one side to the other.

A little farther up the trail, on the Dikaba plain, we got into trouble with the wagons miring in the

damp ground. The soil was lush with vegetation and very soft, so that the wheels sank deep into it. When the first wagon bogged, we hooked the second team of oxen to it but could not even then drag it clear. Mind you, that meant ninety-six animals, all straining in one long line of brute force that looked as though it could pull the bottom out from under a mountain. Consequently we unhitched the third team and added that at the head of the line. All the blacks shouted and lashed, and finally the hulking wain came slowly forward through the sucking ooze.

All day we toiled until late in the evening, before we had the last wagon over and on hard ground. Then we turned the animals out to graze on the rich grass and gathered round our fire for a double celebration —for it was Christmas Eve! We had a bottle of Scotch after the day's work and the promise of a rest on the morrow, to give us the break and our animals a full day in this rich pasture.

From his stock of canned goods Brown managed a very creditable Christmas dinner for us. We baked our own bread these last weeks, after the supplies from Mafeking had given out. This we did by stirring up a dough with baking-soda and burying it in a camp-oven in the hot coals of the fire during the night. Sometimes it came out a bit black, but often done to a turn. Brown had not been trained to raw meat, so that we had some of his tinned corned-beef to play the rôle of turkey.

On the second or third of January we had a thorough scare. We were in country where the grass was very high, up to four and five feet in places. It was fairly dry just at this time. Far up the prairie to the northwest we saw a thin line of fire with great clouds of smoke hanging over it. Our oxen began to sniff and show signs of fear. We knew that it meant back-firing and that quickly, if we were to get our train out of danger, so we started our own blaze at once and watched it race down the plain. Then we drove the wagons into the charred area and waited for the curtain of fire to sweep down upon us.

Long before the flames were dangerously near, the line of standing grass to our windward began to give forth such a menagerie as would make the collected zoological gardens of the world look meager. Every kind of small animal we had ever heard of seemed to come out of that fecund grass. There were antelope and deer and jackals by the hundred, snakes of every size and description and a few larger beasts. But there were none of the bigger animals, such as zebras and giraffes. It was either not their country or they had gone around us. We traveled for well over an hour before we were across the blackened area that marked the extent of the flames.

And then came Tati. We had arrived at the end of our four-hundred-mile trip in seven or eight weeks, thus averaging seven or eight miles per day throughout the long trek—not what one would call disre-

garding the speed-laws in this day of automobile travel!

Lind was a carpenter and soon was off my hands through the job he found. I was jack of all trades and master of none, though I kept this latter to myself on all occasions when there was bargaining to be done. That was especially true in my meeting with the general manager of the Tati mine. In the local hotel there was a long verandah, where practically all of the colony spent the greater part of their evenings. There were only seventeen or eighteen white men in the place. It was there that I met the mine-manager, who told me that they had a shaft which had not been operated for some time and which he was ready to give me on a contract basis, if I had the necessary knowledge and energy to make it produce as it should. It required a real miner, one who could secure and handle a goodly number of natives and could keep them on the job. I was to be paid on contract and was offered a good price. The second or third day after our arrival the papers were signed and I was an independent mine-operator. But it did not happen so abruptly as that. There had to be the sealing of the contract by the universal custom of the country, and this nearly cost me more than any mine-shaft could produce.

It was explained to me just where the shaft was located—near a kraal, where the company had some wagons and the necessary outfit. This kraal was repre-

sented as only two or three hours walk from Tati. The sealing of the document left me with a very decided opinion of my ability to deal with the natives and to do almost anything else that any other man could do. So, just to prove this, I took my swag and rifle on my back and set out on foot for that kraal. I had a perfectly good horse in the stable but spurned at that moment the need of help from man or beast.

When I had walked myself pretty well sober, it was nearing dusk. The prairie carried a grass five or six feet high, some of which I padded down to make me a bed. I took out my rubber sleeping-bag and lay down to rest. Toward morning I was awakened by a terrible noise. I could not tell just what it was. There was something hovering immediately over me, which looked like a big bird that had been scared by some movement I had made. After that I could not sleep any more and so got up to continue my search for the kraal. Entirely sober by this time, I made the best deductions I could from the hazy recollections of the previous day and headed in what I thought was the right direction. I traveled about an hour before the sun appeared. I was apparently on high ground, as there was a steep slope downward on my left and far below on the right a Kaffir kraal. Not at all certain that this was the place I sought, I decided, nevertheless, to go along and ask for a bite to eat.

As I stepped off the road and walked down the hillside, something sprang up out of the grass not

much more than fifty feet to my right and roared, I can assure you, "like a lion." It was a blood-freezing sound. I was scared stiff and there was no doubt about it. He was a beautiful beast, but I wasn't interested in his type of beauty at the moment. I did not know what to do. At such close range I did not dare fire and wound him, for he would have been on me in a second.

Driven by some unaccountable instinct, I stared the roaring "king" straight in the eye. Then I moved off at an angle down the hill, keeping my gaze square on him all the time. I had hardly started before he began to move also and that in the direction angling away from me. In a moment he slunk off into the grass. I took a full breath and carried on toward the kraal, mopping my brow and realizing that it was no fun to stare at lions when there were no iron bars between.

I told the induna what I had come for and found him very loath to give me men. Finally he consented to send four with me. They first guided me to the kraal where I should have gone. There I found the men and outfit of the company and also my horse, which one of the whites had brought out for me, knowing that I should require it when my normal state of mind for traveling should return. The shaft was only half-an-hour's walk from this kraal, on high ground, with good fertile land around it.

My first task was going to be to satisfy the natives

and make them willing to work well for me. With this in mind I set about killing them some meat and, through all the days I ran this shaft, I continued to supply them with more of this welcome element in their diet than they had ever been given before. Good food and good treatment were the cardinal principles in my handling of the blacks, a policy that netted me much.

CHAPTER X

The Abandoned Shaft

THEY called it "The Abandoned Shaft," because it had been given up during the uprising of 1889 to '90 and never worked since then. Some said that it was not the rebellion, but the snakes that had really driven the workers away. The German who was given me as a carpenter, a gray-haired man of from forty-five to fifty, warned me that I had undertaken a big job and added that I would find I was "too young for the position."

"Has age much to do with it?" I parried in defence of my youth and the feeling of willingness to try anything that presented itself.

"You'll find the natives around here are a hard lot to handle. I hope you get through all right."

So it was the blacks, as well as the snakes, that had lurked behind his lugubrious counsel. I had only four of them from the induna of my lion-kraal, and six from the Tati mine. Mr. Thompson, the head of the Tati Concession works, had made an agreement with me, under which I was to find my own men, pay and feed them. If I failed to secure enough blacks, the

senior concern would help me. All mining materials and supplies were to be for their account. My pay was to be on the basis of the work done.

The shaft looked very old, with a wooden shed over the mouth containing a boiler, hoisting-engine, cables and pump. It was about ten by twelve feet and well timbered. The first time I looked in I saw a cobra's head sticking out from one of the horizontal beams. Everything showed there was plenty of work to be done. The first the old German tackled was the job of fixing the doors that folded down over the shaft. These had to be made tight, so that we could begin our raid on the snakes.

Mr. Thompson had supplied me with two bags of a chemical, whose name I have now forgotten, which, when dropped into water, would generate a poisonous gas of sufficient strength to kill all life within its reach. So we sent one of these sacks below, as soon as the doors were fixed, just as a warning note to the present occupants to move. The natives would not go anywhere near the shaft, so that the carpenter and I had to do all this preliminary work. For the time being, it would have been foolish for any one to attempt a descent to explore the condition of the mine, as his life would not have been worth a poor gamble. So we covered the hatch with sacks and went about our other tasks.

The first of these was to put our houses in shape. There was a square one and two round ones, built in

the accepted native style, with walls of bamboo or other poles thickly plastered with mud and with roofs of the same material. All-mud houses would have been too close for this hot region. These pole-and-mud ones, with the air space that was left between the top of the sides and the roof, gave the absolutely necessary ventilation. Mine had no windows, just the opening for the door, through which came all the light it had. The carpenter made me two good stretcher- or camp-beds and a table, so that I was ready to begin housekeeping with room for one guest.

It was the natives who did the work of furbishing up the houses and roofs, as they all seemed past masters at this and needed no help save the tools with which we had been supplied. Two of the blacks from the Tati mine came from a kraal only an hour and a half away on foot and soon brought me in some of their fellow-tribesmen to help. That was the first point gained. Then the other four from Tati did not want to go back, as had been agreed they should. I was making progress against the old German's predictions and worked hard to keep the spirit of the place right. He wasn't at all convinced, though, by these preliminary skirmishes and told me one day not to be too sure of myself, saying:

"It is only a matter of time before they will get you."

He was working these first days with me on the engine-house to bring it to a usable condition. At the

end of a fortnight, Mr. Thompson visited us and enquired at the very outset:

"How are you coming on? How are your snakes?"

"Too busy to think about them," I replied. "I'm going to give them a little more perfume in a day or two." He allowed me to keep the four men who wanted to remain with me and told me they were having trouble of late getting blacks for the big mine. I thought it a bit of humor to offer to find men for him, if he couldn't get them through other channels.

But there was much that I needed from him still—packing for the pumps, cylinder-bolts and a dozen similar things, before I could ever hope to get the engine to turn over. Once we thought we were ready, we fired the boiler and got up steam, only to find that one of the valves was sticky and would not keep time. So we had to turn engineers and take the whole thing down. About this time they sent a young English lad along to act as hoisting-engine man. He was not any too expert around machinery but that fitted fairly well into our own carpenter and sailor trainings for this type of work. What with blacks, snakes and a wheezy engine, we were a motley crew to start running a gold-mine. I had to train all of them as best I could. No Kaffir could be trusted with the hoisting work, so that I had to put up with my English lad.

During these first days I often visited the near-by Kaffir kraal. These people were Makalakas, a branch

of the Matabele tribe, and were much more advanced in cultivation of their fields than the natives further north and east in Matabele land proper. My first effort was to establish the best of relations with them, which enabled me to buy for ourselves and the men cabbages, beets, potatoes, a vegetable like kale, eggs and milk.

You know the cow in this part of Africa is the measure of the tribe's fortune and the practical medium of exchange. It is not only the measure of wealth but is also used for riding. From the milk the natives make a species of butter, very white and soft and far from appetizing. I never learned to like it.

No, there are very few horses round the kraals. It's the Boers who raise most of them for this part of the continent. You see the Tati district is not far from northern Transvaal, where all the farms and settlements have abundant supplies of fine stock.

At the very outset, as I told you a moment ago, I made an effort to win the natives through giving them a liberal supply of meat. I soon discovered a watering-place on the small river near the shaft, where the animals came down every morning, not by the dozen but by the hundred. Out of the great variety I always chose a small species that closely resembled our deer. I never did learn its name. It was brown with white spots, a white belly and small, straight horns. From the persistence with which I went to the water-hole and kept not only my own men but the kraal supplied

with game, the tribe gave me the nickname of "*Molongo injama*" or "Master of meat."

Yes, there were some mornings when I got into a bit of trouble with the larger visitors to the river. As a matter of fact, I did have several rather narrow shaves. There were always plenty of rhinos in the troops that came down, and I was charged by them not once, but many times. But I got rather used to it before long. They are not clever beasts and do not see well. All you have to do is to wait until they are fairly close to you and then jump aside. If you happen to be on a slope below them, when they charge, they will often go slithering down and tumble in great mountains of flesh beyond you. Of course you've got to keep fairly cool and not lose your head, or it may go hard with you.

It was the tree-leopards, tiger-cats and lions that we had to watch out for. Let a leopard sight you from above before you see him, and you can count on trouble. I also learned through these and later years never to shoot standing at a lion. If you give one a chance to see you exposed and to measure the distance to you, you may have him on you before you think he could possibly start. They jump an incredible distance. I once had one cover the twenty feet between us—but that comes later.

The rhinos were a domineering lot among the other animals. They always wanted their own way round the drinking-place and usually got it. Did you know

that where you see rhinos you are very apt, almost certain, to find zebras? Somehow, I never did figure it out or get any real information on it. The rhinos seem to use the zebras as sentinels to warn them of danger. I've watched hundred of these striped horses near rhinos, evidently performing this outpost duty. Yes, I also saw giraffes by the dozen, but I never came within range of one. They are the wildest, slyest animals I ran across in Africa. There were also buffalo among the drinkers at the river. We could go close to them without fear. At different times I saw not hundreds but thousands of them on the prairies.

On one other occasion, during these months at this mine, I had a narrow squeak with some rhinos that was due entirely to my own carelessness. I started out one day across country on foot, instead of taking my horse. My way led me through a fairly thick wood. Well inside it, I found myself at a turn around some bushes face to face with three of the monsters. One of them lifted his head, showing that he had seen something, and charged me. I waited until he was near enough, jumped aside and struck off at an angle—but not far, for there were seven more of the beasts! With the single one behind me, I was now fairly well surrounded. One of the new troop lowered his tusk to give me a ride. I chose a tree this time, a gum-tree, easy and fast to climb. All seven of the monstrous things came directly below me, sniffed in every direction, looked out of their tiny eyes and decided that

something irregular must have happened, for none could locate the enemy. For half an hour they sniffed and browsed, while I gazed down and wondered. Then they got another idea and lumbered off far enough for me to slide down and leg it for open country.

But now back to the shaft. Shortly after the second bag of chemicals went down, we opened the hatch and let it ventilate for two more days before attempting to enter. The engine and the pump were going and ready for work. Neither the carpenter nor the natives would go down first, so I had to do this job myself. The shaft was said to be ninety feet deep, with the first level at thirty-seven feet below the platform.

As I went down the ladders I could see dead snakes all over the timbering but was not able to enter the first level, as the water came three feet above its floor. So we started to pump. Then one of our hoisting-cables broke—fortunately not when I was in the bucket—so that we could not do anything until we could get another and splice it on. My sailor's training stood me in wonderful stead with this kind of work and the rigging that had to be done around the mine-head and made many of these tasks possible without calling outside help. Being jack of all trades was proving more useful that I had ever imagined it would.

After two days of pumping, the water was lowered sufficiently for me to enter the upper-level tunnel. I felt a little squeamish about going down with that

English lad running the engine, for he had not inspired the greatest confidence by his handling of the levers. Inasmuch as he always had trouble learning to match the rails of the platform on which we hoisted up the ore-trolley with those at the edge of the opening at the shaft-head, I never knew just what he might do with me, once I was out of his hearing below. That was all part of the venture.

Now I trust you won't throw the book aside and call me names, when I tell you how many pailfuls of snakes I took out before I had the place clear. Fifty! Yes, not a bucket less—and I had to collect them all myself, mostly with forks but many with my hands. They were chiefly on the transverse timbers of the shaft-lining near the top and counted principally cobras and copperheads. I found also some small animals that had evidently been living in peace with these strange neighbors. The natives were thoroughly scared and would not come near the shaft until I had assured them there was not another snake, dead or alive, in the dark hole. At first they would not even empty the buckets, so that I had to go up and dump them myself. Finally they yielded this point and helped dispose of them.

Two or three loads of rails, timbers and all the things needed to put the shaft and tunnel in shape had been sent out from Tati, so that soon we were working full time below-ground. After about two months we struck a point in the tunnel where the vein

bent upward, so that we could drive a stoop with a force of twenty-odd men. Two or three weeks of this stooping brought goodly quantities of ore to the surface. Now if you are at all familiar with quartz-mining, you know that the veins are generally found in blue rock or what we call red reef. My contract gave me four pounds ten shillings for every foot of tunneling I made in the blue rock seven feet high and six wide, and three pounds ten for each foot in the red reef. This latter is a decomposed rock that can practically always be taken out with the pick, without the necessity of blasting, unless it happens to be streaked with blue rock.

Fortunately we struck it rich, not only in finding most of the veins running in the reef but also in sinking a ventilating shaft that uncovered a new vein in this rock that gave very high assays. It was only thirty feet underground and carried us square into the top of the stoop we were running. Things grew so lively that I put on three shifts of men, working eight hours each, and gave them a new basis which pleased them immensely. I used to lay out the work for each gang and tell them that, when they had finished the job, they could quit. There were fifty or sixty of them by this time, and they were making hundreds of pounds a week for me.

I was paying these men one pound a month and their food, which cost me five or six shillings. In addition to the ordinary ration of mealies, or cracked corn,

and meat, I gave them potatoes to help out. Then there was a variety of wild potato, very much like a yam but more fibrous, which they themselves gathered with other wild plants and used constantly.

It was a joy to work under these conditions with the men so satisfied, when other mines were having constant trouble. Soon I went a step further and made some of the more intelligent natives foremen in their gangs and gave them a little more money for seeing that the work was done right. Gradually the routine became so well organized that I had time on my hands and made use of it to roam the countryside. I went much to the kraal, where I was always sure of a hearty welcome.

On these journeys I kept my eyes open and found in several places evidences of outcrops that were worth investigating. One day I asked Mr. Thompson, when he was at the shaft on an inspection trip, exactly where the line of the Tati Concession ran.

"Just to there," he answered, pointing a little distance to the west. "From that point we go back ten miles. The land beyond our boundary belongs to a kraal over the hill."

I started at once to bargain with the induna, who proved not to have the power to close any deals himself without appealing to a medicine-man higher up in the tribe. I simply told him I wanted a piece of land and did not appear too anxious about consummating the transaction. He would not give his answer at once,

so I continued to visit him in a purely friendly way and to take him an occasional bottle of whisky. He was very fond of the native *juala* but preferred a good bottle of Scotch.

Though the Tati Company had allowed me nothing for all the work I put into fixing up the buildings and cleaning out the old mine, I knew that I had a tidy sum coming for my ore and was anxious to put some of it back to work on my own account. So I prospected this ground in a rough way, picking and digging over every promising place. One day the induna finally asked me how much land I wanted. I wasn't very particular. He showed me a strip in the general direction I had indicated which fortunately included my principal outcrops.

How did I buy it? I got Mr. Thompson to write out a deed for seven hundred acres, took it to the induna and secured his mark on it. As purchase-price I paid him fifteen pounds sterling, two bottles of whisky, one blanket which he strongly coveted for the picture of a lion that was woven into the fabric and, finally, an old Martini-Henry rifle. With the agreement signed, I had Mr. Thompson record it for me in Bulawayo. Then I was owner of seven hundred acres of land and a possible gold-mine of my own.

In passing, I might mention that we always had to pay the natives in gold coins. They would never take paper. Nor could we get a calendar month out of them. They watched the *kanyanga*, or moon, and knew the

mali pondo, or pound. On this basis they could and would deal with the white man, but on no other.

It was shortly after this, with an increased force sending up tons of rich ore, that we struck one vein which sampled fifty-two pennyweight of gold per ton. It was in the red reef and ran from six to sixteen inches wide and four to fifteen feet high.

Then there came another development of quite a different nature. It was about five months after we had started work. I fell ill, and very ill. The water was probably the cause of my fever. I was soon unconscious and remember little of those days, save the awful taste of some of the medicines they gave me. The kindly feeling of the natives for me was probably the means of saving my life, for they at once brought one of their most skilled medicine-men, who stayed by and cared for me during all the days that the fever ran.

As I had lived so much with them in their kraals and was really not a very particular or finicky person, it seemed quite the natural thing for me to allow them to doctor me in their own way. Days of unconsciousness were followed by more of weakness, before I could go back to work. Meantime, things in the mine slowed up considerably. But, whatever else happened, it was certain that I owed my life to the care the indunas gave me.

Nor would they take anything for it. They might have had a considerable fortune for themselves, if

they had chosen to take the whisky case, partially filled with gold dust, which I kept under my bed. Mr. Thompson came over frequently to see how I fared and said afterwards he was thoroughly surprised at the progress I made under their treatment. He told me I shook enough to rattle my bed to pieces.

There are three principal diseases endemic in this part of Africa—malaria, dysentery and black fever. It is usually the last that plays havoc in the white settlements. I was following the general practice of taking liberal doses of quinine at the time I fell ill, but was immediately forbidden this by the medicine-man, who gave my servants strict instructions against allowing me any.

There came later an even greater proof of the goodwill the natives bore me. Months had passed since my illness, months of more successful and happy work around the old shaft. This time it took the form of a warning from one of the big indunas, who had called me his blood-brother and who now told me that an uprising was brewing. There was again great dissatisfaction in the mining-camps over the treatment the natives were receiving from the white bosses. My boys had told him that I never carried a *shambo* and that I was always fair with them. So he gave me this timely warning and told me that, if I would come to their kraal, he could promise me sure protection.

My thoughts ran in a different direction, however. If this rising should become serious, it might easily

imperil the Tati Concession or, at least, embarrass it temporarily. So I thought it wiser to take time by the forelock and make an immediate settlement with them for my work. I had previously ridden with Thompson over my own little concession and shown him some of the richest outcrops. Now he was willing to buy me out and paid me practically the same amount for my land-rights as he did for my work in the abandoned mine, where I had by now sunk two new shafts and done a good bit of tunneling. Through this development work which we did on the snakes' nest this property was thoroughly proven and became one of the important undertakings of the Concession.

When the totals were figured I had the tidy sum of £15,000 to my credit for those nine months and received from him cheques for that amount. With these bits of paper in my belt I stepped from the rank of miner to that of capitalist, ready for the new experiences which this rôle might have in store for me.

Naturally I had first to squander a bit of my quick wealth in Tati, where I found Lind still on his six pounds a week and shared some of my luck with him. I had to wait two or three days for the coach to Mafeking to come along, as I preferred to ride along with it for company and protection. When it did not appear on schedule time, I grew impatient and decided to start out alone.

South of the river, not more than ten miles away, I suddenly heard shooting behind me and made for a

neighboring wood. There I dismounted, tied my horse in the brush and came back to the edge of the forest to investigate. The firing had been of so definite a character and had ceased so abruptly that I was puzzled to know what it could mean. If it was the beginning of the uprising, surely it would have carried on longer than that. I was already across the border into Bechuanaland and wondered what could possibly be a-brewing.

Then I discovered the coach coming along the road and waited for them to draw abreast of my place before disclosing my whereabouts. What I saw made me hesitate. There were four mounted guards who were arguing with the passengers. Finally everything seemed to be settled, and the whips cracked again. I joined them after that and learned later that these men had been engaged for several hundred pounds to guard the coach to Mafeking and had staged the false alarm to enable them to hold up the passengers and demand a larger fee for the dangers through which they were evidently destined to pass.

In spite of the character of my company, I joined the riders and remained one of them until the coach drew into Palachwe. There I sold my horse for a good sum and retreated to the inside of the coach, into the softening luxury of the rich!

CHAPTER XI

Railroading and a Gold Boom

IT was the second time I had come down the Mafeking Road with my mind full of the gold possibilities of the north. This time I had more of real evidence than unsaleable knowledge and was determined to make a big strike with the fair fortune which £15,000 represented to me in those days.

Why didn't I fit out an expedition and go right back to the Shangani with an adequate equipment to take a real fortune out of our river of gold? That's a fair question that deserves a fair answer. First, to organize properly such an undertaking required not only many thousands of pounds at the outset but good solid financial backing to carry one through the possible difficulties which can always come in gold-mining. This much I well knew. But more than that, McKinnon's death had given the place such a black mark in my books, after I was a bit away from the lure of the gold we had seen, that I had no heart to go into the country again with only a single partner or a small group.

Moreover, I had had enough of roughing it for the

moment and, like all miners the world over, I had made my pile and wanted to go to town with it.

Once I reached Johannesburg, I took quarters in the Kimberley Club, the best hotel in the place and the one frequented by the men with whom I then wanted to be in touch. There I met Barney Barnato and the Robinson brothers, John and Robert, now the owners of Robinson Deep, one of the best-known mines on the Rand. They had started as ordinary miners and were now among the richest men in South Africa. In a short time I became fairly well acquainted with all the group.

I cashed my cheques and began looking around for investments. The Johannesburg exchange was a wild market, with all sorts of gold-mine and other stocks being boomed and pricked in quick succession. But Robinson Deep and Simmer and Jack were looked upon as fairly conservative, so that I began buying. Then I picked up a block of ground in Johannesburg.

Now, if you've followed my tale so far, you have probably guessed that I was very much of a gambler. To a miner, "dust" means nothing if not the opportunity to go to town and throw it around. I was no exception.

Also it was the custom in those days of easy wealth to help a fellow-countryman who had run into hard luck and wanted to get away. Everybody around the Rand and the other successful mining-centers was open-handed. So it was nothing out of the ordinary for

me to buy a ticket home for a Swede whom I met about town and start him off with a little money in his pocket. We were living the life of easy-going gentlemen, and the heart expanded under it.

But it was the tantalizing cards that finally brought an end to these days of ease. I always played a keen game and usually won fair amounts; but I hit a vein that pinched on me and ran into tough going for a while. A single night at "Nap" cost me over a thousand pounds. When I tried to win it back—well, that story has been told as often as a miner has gone to town.

I still had my stocks and my two blocks of land in Umtali and Johannesburg and was not broke by any means, but I had again reached the point where I wanted to work rather than take further chances of being cleaned out. So I dropped down to the coast at Durban and had another little fling there, in the course of which I met an employee of the Natal railway. He introduced me to the manager, who was looking for a man with just my knowledge of the country to secure native labor to work in the line. They were relaying the rails beyond Pietermaritzburg and were having trouble securing sufficient blacks to keep the crews going full time. They needed two hundred fifty men and had far short of that number. The manager offered me a regular salary with a fee of two shillings sixpence for every native I secured for them. As this seemed to be just the kind of life I was looking for at

the moment, I signed with him, not only to secure natives but to act as interpreter and adjuster of all disputes.

The track had to be relaid all the way to Ladysmith, so that there was the prospect of plenty of work ahead. When all had been settled, I took the train for the first station or two beyond Pietermaritzburg, where I found seven white men as engineers and bosses and only about a dozen natives to do the actual work. Seeing from this that there was evidently something wrong in the handling of their problem, I not only made myself known to the foreman but made clear the sole basis on which I would secure natives and be responsible for their continued work and good behavior. The man's reply was clear and to the point.

"We need you badly and the natives, too, if ever any one did."

Now it's a good deal of a trick to make the African work, and the trouble with most of the whites was that they would not take time to learn it. Perhaps they had not had the advantage of being thrashed as much as I had and did not know the inconvenience of it. In other words, they hadn't the sympathy born of the first mate's fist, with which we sailors were provided.

The first thing I did was to have a talk with one of their best laborers. He was a Basuto from over the border to the west. Though I could not speak his tongue, he could nevertheless understand my Makalaka and Matabele. He guided me on a three-day walk

to his kraal and there introduced me to his chief, to whom I presented some calico, a bottle of whisky and a few other trinkets. I had no sooner said:

"We are going to build a railway and shall treat the men well, if they do their work," than he immediately asked:

"Will you use the *shambo?*" This, I found, was invariably the first question here, as well as all over the north. I guaranteed that the *shambo* would never be used and began bargaining for the pay. Though I had been authorized to exceed, if necessary, two pounds ten per month, I succeeded in getting two hundred men immediately at this figure, but only for a contract period of three months. That night I remained in the kraal and was treated royally, before I started out at the head of my laborers the following morning on the trek back across the border into Zululand.

The men worked well and without giving any trouble. One gang lifted the old rails, while another laid down the new ones. It was interesting to see the way they stood in a close line along the rail, simply bent down and, without hooks of any kind, just took the heavy steel bar in their hands and swung it high up over their heads. There they held it aloft until they were in position and then placed it gently down again, as though it were a pole. In this way the handling of the heavy things became very simple and expeditious.

Naturally I at once applied myself to the task of

acquiring their tongue and had some amusing mistakes to my credit. Once I ordered my boy to watch my house, while I was away—at least, I thought I had. But I learned later that I had told him to set fire to it. Happily he had more sense than I had knowledge and did not obey my command.

Another early step was persuading the boss that he could get much more from his men, if he would feed them properly. He joined me in some initial hunts and let me continue to shoot as liberally as I pleased for their kettles. This and my natural inclination to help them make their work and life as pleasant as possible earned for me among the white men the nickname of "nigger-lover."

One day we had an unexpected ally in a hunting expedition. I had run hounds before but never managed a leopard for the chase. A fine specimen of the felines chased a scared calf into the river just near us but could not realize on his work, so we had roast veal for dinner.

When more men were needed, I did not go all the way into Basutoland but this time to a Zulu kraal only a single day's march away. The Zulus are known to be better workers than the Basutos and are in greater demand. But I found them nearer the coast and more tainted with bad habits. Neither were to be trusted in any such degree as the Matabeles and Makalakas with whom I had earlier worked.

But there was reason enough for some of their bad

habits in the examples the white men set them. In spite of my promises to the indunas that the *shambo* should not be permitted in the camps, one of the bosses used a pick-handle on a Zulu one day near Colenso and beat him up very badly. An uproar followed, in which revolvers were drawn and two natives severely wounded. If I had not been able to control them before they ran amok, they would have wiped out the white gang completely. As it was, half of them left. When I followed them to the kraal to secure others to take their places, the induna met me with bitter reproaches and refused to allow any more of his men to accompany me. So I had to go off in another direction and find a different kraal.

Yes, these men were hired in the same way as those I spoke of in the north, by the moon and in gold. If they came when the moon was not at the full, they knew just how many days it was before or after this and always reminded us when the lunar period had run its course.

In general the Natal railway treated the men well. It was only these uncontrolled individuals who made the trouble. And the natives on their part made good return to the company with their work and good-will. I had again a sample of their care of me one day when I smashed my thumb with a hammer-blow. It was blue and bruised, so that it hurt unmercifully. One of the more intelligent natives made me sit down, while he brought a tin can of water and built a fire under it.

Then he forced me to hold my thumb in the water till —have you ever boiled any part of yourself? Well, he boiled me, and, what's more, he made me keep that throbbing thumb right in the can until he thought it was done. And I assure you the pain went away!

There was one incident in my life on the line of which I am not so proud as I seem to be of my handling of the natives. It was over the question of a tent, about which a French Canadian and I disagreed. Now I was no chicken in those days, and knew how to use my fists, after the training I had had at Kimberley. If he had landed as many blows on my head as I got through to his, he would have had my diamond belt long before the verdict finally came. But that Canuck had a head of ivory. Nothing seemed to dent it. You may laugh, if you choose, but we fought for an hour and a half without either side being able to make the other cry quits. And then the work-train came along to move our camp up the line three or four miles. Once this interference was out of the way, we lay to again and might have had to call it a draw, if he had not got to my stomach with his foot. That put me out and settled the argument. But his side of the fight did not end there. The rest of the gang were so disgusted with him for his tactics that they beat him up and drove him off the job. The whole thing taught me a good lesson—that it was, after all, a poor way to settle disputes. And that was the last fight I ever had.

Shortly afterward, toward the end of 1895, I be-

came restless again and went down to the shore for another two weeks of fun, then back to Johannesburg. It was just the time that the Umtali gold-boom was on and everybody was leaving the town for the new Eldorado in Mashonaland, just as the miners left California for Alaska. Always ready for something new, I formed a group with six others and joined the stream.

From Durban the sea trip to Beira was roughly a thousand miles. Now this port was known all through South Africa as the White Man's grave, because of the awful ravages of fever and dysentery. Though it had at that time a population of only some three hundred whites, there were scores that died every day. That may look like poor arithmetic, but it is a fact, owing to the way the new arrivals fell ill and died like flies, most of them from drinking the water.

We found two hotels in the place, the Beach Hotel, run by a woman, and the other by a German. I mention them, because they give a key-note to the country. Both were big, with plenty of room in them, but were built entirely of corrugated sheet-iron on two-by-four framings. The lower rooms were wainscoted, but the bedrooms showed unblushingly the upright studs and the iron outside them. The beds were as crude as the structure, and for accommodations such as these the lowest price was ten shillings per day. Yet they were always full.

In Beira we found a crowd of gold-rushers waiting

to get up to Umtali, that is, if they could keep out of hospital long enough to call it waiting. The whole coast of this section of Portuguese East Africa is picturesque, with wonderful scenery and unimaginably fertile soil, but pestilential beyond belief. Most of the population were Portuguese, though the railway—that was then but a thirty-inch gauge for construction work and extended beyond Umtali into Mashonaland—was a British undertaking, being developed, I believe, by the Chartered Company.

I had not been long in the town before I heard they were looking for an engineer and then met a man, named Lawley, who seemed to be the head of everything. He offered me the job, and I promptly accepted, though I did not recall ever having had a locomotive-throttle in my hand before. Nevertheless, I had been a bit of a mechanical genius all my life and could make almost anything go. Even as a boy, when I was given a watch I promptly took the thing apart and put it together again—though I did have three wheels left over! But I didn't feel afraid of tackling this job, as the engine was so tiny a thing that they called the line the "coffee-pot railway."

It led, though, to the place we wanted to go and which we might easily never reach by the suicidal transport of the caravans, for men died before they could get across Dynamite Flat, just back of Beira. So I told my six companions I had a job as an engineer and that I would investigate the passenger-carrying

possibilities of my first train of six cars loaded with lumber.

There was a conductor in charge of it, who had quarters in a sort of caboose on the last car. When I broached the subject to him, he said that they might go for a price, a price that we would divide between us in return for our trouble over them. I hadn't it in my heart to charge my own companions for a ride on my train, so I appeased him with the promise to be a good partner in our future travel business. But we couldn't take them on board there in Beira. That would have been too bold. The passenger-station for our flyer was the first water-tank, three miles into the country. There we picked them up and set out for the mountains—and their gold.

Everything went all right as far as Fontesvilla, the first real station then along the line, if I mistake not. The town was a surprise to all of us. The houses were built on stilts, twelve or fourteen feet off the ground. This, I learned, was made necessary by the heavy floods. There were four or five buildings with rows of single rooms opening off a long verandah, which the railway company had furnished with camp-beds for any one that might come along to occupy them. During later trips I came in not once but several times and found these beds filled with men, down with fever or dysentery.

Beyond this unusual railway town we had an unusual thing happen in a railway locomotive—the mis-

erable little boiler went dry on me. Naturally I did not dare use my injector, for the superheated thing would have blown us to Jericho. I had my fireman jam the box full of coal to choke the fire and save the plugs from fusing, opened the manhole on the top and poured in water from buckets and any other articles we could muster to carry the precious liquid from a stream near by. By the luck of our stars, the thing did not burst on us. None of the crew or of my crowd chose to air the incident, so that my career as a "coffee-pot" engineer was not nipped in the bud.

Once across the plains with our trailing queue of merchandise, we started up a series of nine or ten switchbacks that raised us to the higher and more healthy regions. At the first station beyond the zigzags I had to meet and pass another train, the first since leaving Beira, though we had already done more than half the three-days' journey to Umtali. The white man in charge of the station had a very nice house and a table spread in the garden with most delicious food, especially enticing to us men who had been living on the sketchy diet of the train picnic-fare. When the meal was over and the table cleared, I was preparing to sleep on it for the night, as the mountain air was not dangerous and the temperature ideal.

"Are you crazy?" asked my host. "If you remain here after dark, you will be eaten alive." He seemed to me a bit over-sensitive on the subject of ferocious animals, but I did not want to twit him with it, as he was

otherwise such a very decent host. In response to his invitation, both the conductor and I took up quarters inside with him.

Not half an hour later Mr. Lion stood just outside the door—and roared! That made me feel different toward my host and his fears, for a moment at least. Then he upset it all by showing so much of a funk that he shot square through the door. He dropped the beast and had a fine skin in the bargain. Perhaps—as I thought it over—he was not so far wrong in his attitude towards these night marauders as I had mentally accused him of being. It looked very much as though *we* were the foolish greenhorns.

Without further major incident we reached Umtali on the following afternoon, three days out from Beira. We found the place one of the most mushroom like mining-towns of South Africa. Everything was booming, and prices were high, owing both to the rush and the difficulty of moving materials over the long haul on the narrow-gauge railway. I took leave of my six companions and turned my coffee-pot around to steam off down the grade again. Each time I arrived with my little toy train, the town looked different. There was not much improvement on the streets, except for an occasional new sprinkling of gravel. No pavements were attempted. It had already five hundred whites and boasted a good, healthy climate.

On one of my trips I had the ill luck to be badly scalded on the leg by the bursting of a pipe, which

necessitated going into hospital at Chimoio or Bandula—I can't remember just which of these stations it was. But it made a lasting impression on me to see a finely equipped, well-staffed institution in delightful surroundings, where we men from the railway could be taken and cared for. It was typical of the thorough way in which many of the English undertakings were managed. I spent several weeks in these pleasant mountain surroundings, enjoying to the full the good beds, the clean linen and the wonderful attention of the nurses, after the years of rough life to which I had become too well accustomed.

It was just shortly after my return to the "handle" of my coffee-pot that I nearly landed myself back in hospital for another general mending. As often happened, the line ahead of us was well covered by one of those many droves of animals that had a habit of using it as a promenade. Though I slowed down and blew the whistle, like a small boy, there was one buffalo that refused to be scared by anything so thin as that. He just stood his ground. So I opened up the throttle and accepted his challenge. We closed. It was not a case of "I hit him," because he deserves full share in the shock. The train was stopped, and he walked away, hurt but not disabled!

There were other elements in the job that were more trying than the animals, far and away. In fact, it offered so little attraction, this railroading of ours, that I could never keep a fireman for more than a trip or

two. Sometimes I had even to fire myself throughout the greater part of a run, when some would-be assistant quit without notice. On one occasion a big, fat countryman of mine applied. I had to warn him that a man of his build could not possibly stand the racket, but he took my admonitions lightly. I was forced to put him off at Fontesvilla and on the next trip found he had gone the way of the great majority of those who ever lie down to rest or recuperate in that fever-stricken hole.

We also had floods to contend with. On one trip the water came up to the second step of the locomotive, though the embankment itself was twenty feet above the plain. A little higher up the line during one of these runs I had my closest contact with a living lion outside a cage—that is, *he* was outside. It happened thus. I sighted the beast in some long grass near the track and brought the train to a halt. Then I sneaked along the rails for a bit to an empty water-tank that had a ladder up the side away from the lion and another running down inside from the rather small manhole in the segment nearest the prairie. The lion was watching my movements, so that I was not sorry when I had taken my place inside my snug little fort.

Bang! And I thought he was mine. But something happened! Now I have told some rather unusual yarns of these South African days and would not destroy any confidence my sincere attempt to keep to the truth may have earned for me; yet I give you this one just

as it occurred, in the hope that you will not refuse to credit it, for it deserves recording.

Before I knew what had happened, that lion was on top of my manhole and I scurrying down the dark ladder. If there had been no manhole, there would have been no story—that is, for me to tell. To make the roof of the tank he had jumped eighteen or twenty feet from the ground! And he was wounded, too. In my excitement I shot again from inside my fortress, making the place ring like an inferno and filling it with smoke. My pursuer fell over and rolled off to the ground. When I appeared covered with blood from head to foot, my conductor was terribly frightened and thought I must be badly wounded; but it was only the lion's blood that was on me. I certainly give him credit for the most sportsmanlike attack and effort that I have ever seen among animals or men.

It is really difficult to impart to one who has not seen them any idea of what our contacts with these wild animals of Africa actually meant. Back from Beira there is a plain called Dynamite Flat, thirty-seven miles across, which literally swarms with every imaginable species of beast. We used to run through endless herds of buffalo, zebras and giraffes, though here again we never came near these last. But we shall come back to a closer view of them in a subsequent tale.

During all these weeks and months that I ran between Beira and Umtali, the various conductors and I

made more out of our passenger business than we did from our monthly envelopes. As the rush was on all the time, men would pay high for transportation of any kind. When I had been eight or nine months on the run, I made a very distinct diplomatic error in letting a whim get the better of my judgment and leaving the company at Umtali, instead of at Beira, where I had been hired. It was all part of the happy-go-lucky do-as-you-please, careless spirit of those days and those parts; but it cost me an official frown, which I had to go high to overcome, as will soon be seen.

As I told you earlier, I had become interested in Umtali before we left Johannesburg and I had bought on the exchange there a plot of ground in the new town. I had also a small sum invested in the Umtali mine, following the lead which Cecil Rhodes gave to the movement. He seemed to have a share in every big development anywhere in the whole southern part of the continent. He had apparently endless millions to put into these scattered undertakings. At Umtali, unfortunately, the mine-stock went up with the boom to extravagantly high figures and then dropped to a disastrous level with the pricking of the bubble. Rhodes and his associates built a huge municipal center, containing a hotel, the post office, a theater and shops. It was not a flimsy or shoddy affair, but a most imposing building.

Wishing to have a share in this boom, I ceased running on the line, when I had gathered together enough

to meet my needs, and started at once with the erection of a building on my land to house a store and a restaurant. I remember hiring a Swedish carpenter at 37sh 6d per day and breaking the ground as soon as I was down off the engine.

The moment the place was ready, I rented the store to a Jew and ran the restaurant myself. There were many people coming into the town all the time, especially carpenters and bricklayers, to whom I could successfully cater. The one feature of my establishment that made it different enough to mention was the fact that I shot my own meat day in and day out, though at times I had a bit of a task to secure the necessary bag. I selected the finest of small bucks and antelope, never taking too large an animal for fear the meat would be tough. Though it was always "venison steak" or "roast venison," it still made an excellent beef pie.

Just across from my place, beyond a little stream, two carpenters built a very neat house in native style and fixed up their garden most attractively. As the majority of the new arrivals, however, lived in rented quarters I rushed up with their aid a row of single rooms, built like our garages of today, each with only a hole in the wall for light and a door as exit. Simple as they were, they rented for a pound a week.

Umtali had all the ear-marks of a mining-town, with the usual life that goes with it. Things, however, began to look a little shaky. I heard some of the blacks on the street jesting in true native style.

"The white man is not going to be here very long. You see that house over there. That's the one I'm going to live in when they are gone."

In one of the many meetings which Rhodes attended I had a feeling that something was not quite as it should be. I often saw the Premier and once or twice chatted with him over our Bulawayo experience. When I first introduced myself, he could not at the outset place the Matabele affair.

"But I have seen you elsewhere since then." He was always gracious—or, rather, just natural, as man to man. The whites in South Africa in those days were on a basis of equality, regardless of their different stations in life. Cecil Rhodes never made any of us feel that there was the slightest barrier between himself and the average miner.

It gradually became evident that, though there was plenty of gold in the Umtali region, the conditions in the country and the high wages made it impossible to work it at a good profit.

One Sunday morning, as matters were growing acute, I remember a peculiar contrast in an old man I met at the house of the two carpenters opposite my place. When I first heard the old fellow speak, I thought he must be a negro who had gone white or was some sort of half-caste, so perfect was his speech and intonations, especially the clicks, those difficult modifications peculiar to the Kaffir languages of South Africa.

I tried him first in English, but found him very sketchy in it. Then he told me he was a Swede and where he had come from at home. The moment I spoke our native tongue he burst out crying.

"You are the first Swede I have met these many years," he said in broken words. He had so far forgotten his mother tongue that he could not use it with any fluency. For sixteen years he had lived constantly among the blacks of Mashonaland and Matabeleland. As we fell to discussing the crash that seemed imminent in Umtali, he expressed the greatest unconcern. He was not worried about mines or trade or any other business. He said that when he was tired, he lay down under a tree. With a gun one did not need to work. A pair of dungaree pants, and you are clothed. What more could one wish?

While we are discussing African costumes, or the absence of them, I might add that the old Swede was not so far from the dress of many of us. Coats were almost unknown and were always shed at every opportunity, even by the big chiefs in the Kimberley Club Hotel. For months I never so much as owned one and frequently was moving so rapidly that laundry-work had to be replaced by simply purchasing other garments and giving the old ones to the natives. I have on certain occasions, where there was plenty of time and the country was of the right character, done my own washing on the river-bank and lived native-style till my clothes were dry.

Almost every one dressed in khaki riding-breeches, even Cecil Rhodes, whom I have often seen in his all-khaki outfit with the B.B.P.—Bechuanaland Border Police—felt hat turned up on one side. He and the Robinson brothers not infrequently appeared in this informal way at the Hotel.

To revert for a moment to the railway—from the time I began running this engine and during all the months spent in Umtali the line was being pushed on northwest toward Fort Salisbury over some rather rugged mountain passes. It was still of the thirty-inch construction type, when the boom had spent its force and broken. I managed to foresee this a little and disposed of some of my holdings in time to recover a part of my investments.

Then came the retribution for my "careless" method of leaving the railway. Mr. Lawley refused me passage down over the road. It was a very long hike to Beira, especially across those pestilential flats at the end. One day rumor had it that Rhodes was due on his way down the line in an inspection train. I walked up a piece from the station and discovered the Premier in a private car, one of the few real passenger-coaches that had been put on the narrow gauge.

I went in and presented myself, explaining to him that I was denied a passage over the road for having quit here instead of at Beira. Mr. Lawley, who was responsible for the refusal, was present in the car and glowered at me. Nevertheless, knowing that Rhodes

was a keen student of human nature and would be considerate to the least among those who had joined a rush to one of his boom towns, I continued:

"Would you not be good enough to intercede for me to be given a passage down?"

"No interceding about it! You stay right here in this coach," he answered good-naturedly. Mr. Lawley accepted the dictation of his chief and was very kindly disposed toward me all the way to Beira.

At one of the stations in the mountains, I remember, the train pulled up for the dinner-halt. There was a neat-looking station, with long tables of bare boards set up in the restaurant and native servants awaiting us. Rhodes had five or six with him beside Mr. Lawley, the president of the road, and asked the rest of us to join him at table. The meal was a delicious one, prepared by a white cook with native helpers and consisting chiefly of a good roast of venison.

You must remember that the best of meals in those places were not the fancy menus you see in our cities hereabouts. We ate well, but never saw any of the sweet dishes which you prize so in America.

What did the native servants wear in the dining-room? The answer is as short as the costumes—a little skin apron. No, that was all. No other garment or gear of any kind. Only the natives coming constantly into touch with the white men are beginning to wear clothes. The Zulus and Basutos are beginning to dress in the towns, but still they never have a real shirt or

a pair of trousers. In the wild parts of the hinterland even the girls go quite naked until they reach a certain age. Then they compromise with our more rigorous custom of covering ourselves and put on a small skin apron. The men in the country have not yet become so fastidious.

So much for the native who intruded into the Premier's dinner party. I fell to talking with Mr. Lawley and told him about some of my wanderings. He became quite interested and soon showed me all the accustomed friendship of the earlier days. He was a very stern man and considerably older than Rhodes, who was then not much over forty. Before the journey was over I had also several long talks with Rhodes himself and was interested to see the way he questioned me on all I had been doing since the Bulawayo days. He had a vast knowledge of the detailed lives of hundreds, probably thousands, of just such men as myself in the South Africa of that day. Also he was known to be most sympathetic, whenever any one went down and needed help. He would stop at almost nothing to give one a lift. All of us who came to know him personally in this way could not help but admire the real man there was in him, entirely aside from the great administrator, to whom we did not give so much thought at that time.

It was always a mystery to us where he got all the money for the innumerable ventures into which he went. It was not thousands but millions that he seemed

to be able always to call upon for his development projects. Whenever he decided favorably and went into an undertaking, others accepted his leadership and followed. At times he erred, just as any one does, but in general there was good substantial value behind his mines.

On this trip down from Umtali he allowed none of us to pay at the stations for our food. We were all his guests. We also had to stop the night at one place along the line, when we slept comfortably in the private car. There were as yet no trains moving after dark, both because of the lack of a signal system and the danger from animals on the tracks.

The only exception I remember to this was one moonlight night back in my engineering days, when I got caught by an accident away from the station where I was scheduled to pass another train. I had a breakdown, not a bad one; but I managed to mend my engine and pulled into port before the sailor's lantern was unmasted.

Yes, you are quite right, there was a great deal more that was of keen interest to me on this trip with Cecil Rhodes; but you must realize that it is now more than thirty years ago, and I cannot call back all the details that went to fill our two days together. I do remember, however, that I was not at all bashful with my yarns and had a most sympathetic audience for the tales of some of my more lively escapades. I recall also my embarrassment at not having a coat in my swag, for

I should have felt more comfortable, even though the others had theirs off during most of the journey. I had not owned one for months.

Down from the mountains for the last time, I turned south again to Johannesburg with several thousand pounds once more in my jeans to go and have another try at beating civilization.

CHAPTER XII

Hunting Lions on Dynamite Flat

WHEN I came back into the capital again toward the end of 1895, stocks were running high. Those that I had bought and held were far above what I had paid for them, so that, with the new stake I had made, what more natural than that I should once more install myself in the Kimberley Club and hasten to make up for the time lost in the wilderness? The card-games ran high for some weeks, as stocks boomed.

Then there came a rumor that Dr. Jameson was preparing a raid into the Transvaal. Some denied all possibility of such a thing, but others became frightened by the effect such a move would have on the market. So I was selected as one of six by a group of stock-dealers on the Johannesburg exchange to go to Mafeking via Kimberley to interview Dr. Jameson and get the facts. If rumor were correct, we should all unload. But we wanted the truth at any cost.

We lunched with Dr. Jameson at Mafeking and had it from him that there was absolutely nothing in the report. At the same time we learned that the Bech-

uanaland Border Police, which every one called his army, were lined up along the Notuani, close to the Transvaal border. I had seen Dr. Jameson once before at Bulawayo during the Matabele rebellion, where he was one of the prominent leaders and had brought in a force from the Mashonaland district. Thinking him to be a man of his word, we all went back to Johannesburg with the firm belief that there was nothing to the rumor.

But then came the raid! That was late in December of 1895. The bottom fell out of the market and left us all scrambling to sell our holdings. I managed to close out mine at a loss of more than half their value and went to the coast again to have a change from the chaotic Johannesburg surroundings.

I was not long in Durban before I met one evening two men who had just come from hunting big game in India and wanted to go after lions in Portuguese Southeast Africa for the money to be made in the skins. They needed a man who could speak the native languages and at once started bargaining with me. They were ready to give me either a salary or one-third the net profits of the expedition, they to furnish everything necessary. All I owned in the way of equipment was a single rifle.

I closed with them and the following day was off again for Beira in a dancing little coaster, the *Kaffir*. When she was no more than clear of the harbor, she began to tumble about until she seemed to turn inside

out. Though I had once been a sailor and had done my turn at sea, I was never so sick in my life as on that little tub. My shore years had evidently made a land-lubber of me!

My first care in Beira was to search for Kaffirs, but this I found impossible because they were making too much money in the town. So we picked up just enough to help us handle our dunnage and set out for Fontesvilla, where we found ourselves so far away from the nearest kraal that I had to take the train back to the next water-station. There I hired a native and struck off into the country. At his kraal I secured some twenty-odd men to work for us in the field. This tribe had the most difficult tongue to understand that I came across in all South Africa.

Once back in Fontesvilla we loaded up the dunnage and marched out along the track for about five miles, where we found some desirable low hills, raised a few feet above the vast plain. The one we chose was a good hour's trek from the rails and lay in the middle of a vast prairie that swarmed with animals of every description.

The porters were well loaded down with our two tents, twenty-four Martini-Henry rifles, the frames for these, a store of provisions, two cases of whisky and all our various belongings. My employers were fully equipped with the necessary tools, axes and nails and knew well the problems they would have to face. Both were English 'varsity men and thorough gentlemen.

The junior partner's name was Allen, but I cannot remember that of the senior.

We set at once about pitching our tents, as we were anxious to have them up before sundown. On Dynamite Flat—for this was the plain to which I had come back—the dew is so heavy that it is an almost certain guarantee of malaria to be without sufficient protection from it. That first night I hardly slept at all for the constant roaring and bellowing of the thousands of animals on the plains around us. We kept twelve great camp-fires burning as a defense and three men to watch them, yet I could not feel easy in my mind with the frequent outbursts of animal threats that came apparently from just beyond our ring of flames. I lay with my rifle close beside me and thought many a time during the long night that I would never have come, if I had imagined for a moment the beasts could be so threatening.

When morning finally broke we found the plain literally covered with buffalo, rhinos, moose with horns like the American elk, giraffes and zebras. These two last remained, as always, far out of range. During this first day we spent most of the time making things shipshape about the camp. Then on the following day they wanted me to shoot a buffalo for them. Reputedly brave man that I was, who had shot so many animals, I lost my nerve on this particular occasion when the lumbering animal charged past me. You never count on killing a buffalo with the first

shot. You wait until he charges, dodge him and then turn and give him the second barrel before he can come fully round. This time I did the dodging but failed to carry out the next step and bolted instead. But my two new masters were old hands at the game and saved the situation by being ready to support me with their guns. What was more and very welcome, they never seemed to hold up against me my temporary loss of nerve.

Once the animal was down, they opened it, pulled out the entrails and left it for the sun to stream down upon. This great buffalo was to be just "bait" for the king of the veldt, who was to be trapped in the following manner. The rifle-frames, which were mentioned as part of our kit, consisted of two strong longitudinal pieces supporting between them two notched transversals in which the rifle could be securely fastened. At from seventy-five to one hundred yards from the bait the rifle was carefully aimed in its frame to shoot at the center of the kill, the frame was then firmly pegged down to the ground and a string drawn from the rifle to the bait. The hook on the end of this was then fastened through the skin on the side of the cut under the belly of the animal.

Now this string passed back taut through the grass to a pulley in the rear cross-piece of the frame. It was then attached to the trigger in such a way that, when it was struck, it set off the cartridge. The rifle, of course, fired directly along the line of the string, so

that it might also be put off by the beast of prey circling or nosing around the bait before he touched it. When we were laying more than one rifle on a single buffalo or other animal, we had always to fasten the hooks, draw the strings away through the grass, aim the rifles and stake down the frames before we cocked the guns, tightened up the strings and fastened them to the triggers. Then we retreated aft of the dangerous machines and gave that bit of prairie a wide berth during the rest of the day.

Naturally there were many occasions on which the gun went off without hitting its mark or killing the beast outright. In the latter case—and this made up the greater part of our serious work—we had to trail the wounded animal by the blood and bring him to book farther away. In order, however, to reduce as much as possible the chance of wounding in this manner, we usually set from four to six rifles on each bait, well angled, so that there would be a strong probability of the lion springing more than one of the triggers through his quick movements after the first gun had been fired.

We governed the number of rifles focused on a single kill by the number of animals we had brought down that day to serve as bait, but never planned to set more than six on any one of them. In this manner there was seldom a morning that we did not have at least two or three lions and sometimes as many as ten or twelve. On certain rare occasions every trap would

be sprung and not a lion in sight. That meant sharp work in tracking. Not infrequently we followed them to their lairs and, when we found they were "at home," you may be sure that we never went in. Whenever we came upon the lion or lioness, as the case might be, near the den, invariably the mate was licking the wounds of the injured one. Shooting lions from the shoulder is not a safe or profitable manner of taking them because of their great power when wounded and the long time that it often requires for the bullet to take effect and stop their furious rush. So we were always very chary about attacking them, especially when they were in pairs or when one of us had gone out alone with the natives.

Their lairs we found mostly dug into wooded hillsides, usually where there was a good covering of bushes and trees about. I saw one of their holes—from which we took out a young cub—that was big enough for us to enter without difficulty and had space enough inside for a whole family to live in comfort. In general, we made it a rule that, the moment we came within sight of the lair, we just turned tracks and got away.

During the daytime we skinned the trapped animals and left the carcasses for new bait. We worked carefully in order to preserve the claws, the mane and all the little corners around the ears and head. At first my employers, who were both expert skinners, had to train the natives as to the best methods, but soon the latter were doing all of this part of the work for us

and leaving us free to carry through our tracking and other tasks.

It was a significant fact which I had never before realized that the kill required the strong sun upon it for a few hours, in order to attract the lion by the odor. If a bait-animal was brought down late in the afternoon, it was of practically no value that day. Unfortunately this was not so true of our tormentors, the jackals, for they came at any time and pulled the guns incessantly.

And how they howled at night! There in the tropics where the daylight and the dark are so nearly equal in length, there is always a long evening to contend with. We played cards and told stories night after night, while the jackals, lions and a thousand other beasts milled about the small circle of our protecting fires. We knew full well that, once let our supply of precious firewood give out on us, the tables would be turned and we should be the bait. Soon, however, we got fairly used to the concert and slept as though there was not a creature within miles of us. Allen, too, had a violin and played it very well. Probably no one has ever had a stranger accompaniment than he did from his animal chorus. Also the natives frequently danced to his music both for our and their own amusement.

Both the partners had wonderful stories to tell of hunting in India, where they had often been out for tiger and had taken a goodly number. When they

asked me about tigers in Africa, I had to admit that I had never seen one in the country and did not even know whether there were any there or not.

What proportion of beasts did we get for the guns set off? Oh, I should say less than fifty per cent—perhaps considerably under that. No, we had no trouble with the natives in this work. We were compelled to raise them from thirty shillings to two pounds in order to keep them contented; but then they served us well and were greatly pleased with the amount of meat we could give them for their diet. I did, however, continue to have difficulty with them over the language, as they had not been long enough among white men to learn the "kitchen Kaffir" which is more or less the lingua franca of the country, and I had not time enough to acquire a ready speaking knowledge of their tongue.

After they had skinned the animals, we treated the pelts with a preparation of arsenic and alum, spread them out around the camp to dry and then, when the quantity warranted, packed them off to the rail. One was a good load for a porter, so that we were frequently occupied with the transport end of our work.

In Beira we had an arrangement with a man to ship as our agent down to Durban, where there was a proper dealer who tanned and prepared the skins for the home market. When I later arrived in Durban I found the hides, tanned and ready for use as rugs, selling there for twenty-five pounds apiece, whereas

we averaged only four pounds ten for our raw pelts and received as low as three pounds ten or fifteen for those which were badly torn.

Yes, of course there were many fights on the plain below us, as the herds worked their way across the feeding grounds. We saw frequent individual brushes between rhinos and buffaloes and sometimes mass battles. The buffaloes usually traveled in large herds; but when there were no more than ten or a dozen in a group, half their number of rhinos might charge them. Once, when I was running the "coffee-pot," I saw such a battle royal, and it was a real movie, if ever there was one. I stopped the train to watch it, as it was not far from the rail.

There must have been between half a dozen and a dozen of both rhinos and buffaloes in the mêlée. The dirt flew high in the air as they charged, recharged and slid. Horns and tusks went home with terrible force. Whenever a buffalo fell, two or three others rushed to his aid and gored the rhino that was horning or trampling him. We held our breath, as the great monsters came together time after time like living battering-rams. Then one would fly into the air, with all his incredible weight, and come down on his opponent or on another in the mass. It is impossible to describe the scene, though I still have a very clear picture in my mind of those great brutes lunging and charging again and again. I do remember distinctly the awe and wonder we felt over their terrible power and perseverance.

At last, as I recall it, two or three of the buffaloes lay stretched on the churned-up turf and the others took to flight. Pools of blood covered the ground.

The rhino is the more stubborn, bull-dog animal of the two and very hard to make throw up the sponge, though I have seen a group of them put out by a sufficient preponderance of their great enemy. You know the African buffalo is much larger than the bison of the American plains and apparently more of a fighter —or perhaps he just lives where there are more worthy opponents. Contrary to the accepted idea, he is heavier in body than the rhinoceros. He will not attack a man, whereas the rhino will.

Our most trying experience with the latter during the days on Dynamite Flat came one morning when I was out with a single native tracking a wounded lion. We had entered a fairly thick wood and were following a blood-trail, when suddenly we found ourselves face to face with six or seven rhinos. To avoid them we turned off to the right and ran square into another drove. Then we bolted back along the trail we had been following, only to find this now closed by two other of the horned beasts. One of them saw me and charged. I dodged, and he went down from the force of his momentum, as he missed me. Before he could turn, I was up a tree. The native had already climbed another. Then we did not have to hurry any more, for the curious, angry beasts kept us there four or five hours.

Even then we should probably have had to spend the night in the branches, if my partners had not suspected something wrong and begun scouring the part of the country toward which the natives showed them we had gone. When they finally discovered us, they had to shoot two of the rhinos before we were free to leave our perches.

On another occasion—also along the railway line—I saw a lion and some other large animal engaged in what looked like a death struggle. I was near enough to see the hair flying from the lion's mane but could not make out what the other beast was and this time did not think the bout interesting enough to warrant stopping the train.

Yes, there was naturally a slight decrease in the number of lions in our immediate neighborhood, but not a great enough change to make any radical difference in our working methods. They did not seem to come so close to our camp, and we also had to keep changing the position of the traps. But in reality there were such vast herds of all kinds of animals—many of which I could not even name—that it seemed impossible to make any great difference in the uncountable thousands of them. We also found an occasional zebra that had run foul of our lines. Their skins had likewise a fair value.

It was not any shortage of animals that ended our work, but the natural enemy that might have been expected to do it—illness. It is almost impossible to

resist dysentery and fever, while living on Dynamite Flat. The senior of the two men was taken ill while we were working and had to be rushed down to hospital. On the way we dosed him up as best we could, and he finally came through. But Allen and I also succumbed on the boat en route to Durban, where Allen died in hospital and I managed to pull through, only after some weeks of racking fever. As I stated when telling you of the railroading experience in this region, the worst diseases are the two just mentioned and black fever. We used to see also some yellow gander, which is akin to yellow fever. Even the senior partner evidently paid with his life for the venture, as he died shortly after his arrival in England.

Worst of all, the whole affair did not net us enough money to warrant even a small part of the risk we took. When everything was paid, there was only two hundred forty pounds left to reward us for the two months and seventeen days of actual hunting. Of course, that would have been a good rate of profit, if we could have continued it and did not have to die to get it; but, as it was, I for one felt that the time had been squandered and that I should have to go back to Johannesburg and look for something more stable than chasing lions.

CHAPTER XIII

The Boer War and the Prison Ship

ONCE more back in the capital of the Transvaal, I balanced things up and made up my mind to quit all this roving around, as there was really nothing permanently profitable in it. I had still some of my mine investments and a fair bank account. So I searched out one of the Robinson brothers to see what possibilities he could suggest. He was keenly interested in all my vagaries and doings and expressed no little surprise at the wholesome coat of tan I had accumulated through the months in the open.

It soon developed that he had a very important engine at the mine which no one in Johannesburg had been able to put into proper working order. He asked me to go along with him and have a look at it. It did not take long to discover that the trouble lay in the cylinder, where there was too much play in the piston-head. So I rebabbitted it and turned up the piston—all to his very definite satisfaction and my profit, as he paid me handsomely for the bit of repair work.

What was more gratifying, he discussed with me a week later a much larger proposal and laid before me three repair jobs of major importance. The highest bid

on one of these was four hundred pounds. He offered to give me fifty pounds over this and to help me establish a regular machine-shop, if I would take the work. Then I found that the old stable on the plot of ground in Johannesburg which I had bought in the days of my opulence came in very handy.

I fitted it up as a repair-shop by scraping together a few simple lathes and other working tools; then hired four men to help me and went at the new tasks. Robinson mentioned me to operators of machinery, and I soon found I was "in business," a rather humorously stable occupation for me after the years of wandering since my arrival in the country. I had the property clear and was in a fair way to become a permanent unit in the life of the place, when other elements came in to interfere with what might have been the starting of a normal existence.

In the inner circle of those closely connected with government affairs a rumor started that an invasion of the country by Great Britain was being prepared. It was the captain of our scout boys who gave me the first inkling of the storm. He had been a lieutenant in the Swedish army, where he had got into some trouble and been forced to slip away. We knew him as Lieutenant Kuehle. He had close touch with General Joubert and later with Botha.

As soon as it seemed fairly certain that the thing was not an empty scare, I went at once to the bank to withdraw my funds. I took out a part of them and in-

tended to return the following morning for the rest—but, alas, that was one day too late. The bank had stopped specie payments. It came very suddenly, because even Mr. Robinson did not know as soon as I did of the certainty of the issue.

With all the money I could gather and with my stocks and deeds I made for Lourenco Marques and placed my valuables in a safety-deposit box in the Portuguese bank there, leaving the key with the manager against the time when I might have to return under stress of war conditions. If only my head had worked just one day sooner in drawing my bank balance, I should have been much better off. With these precautions taken, I went back to Johannesburg, to find that matters had begun moving very fast.

I had already become a citizen of the Transvaal, having taken out my first papers when I was in Johannesburg in 1893 or 1894. I cannot remember the exact date of my return from Lourenco Marques, but I do know that units were already forming to go to the front. I immediately joined the Swedish brigade headed by Lieutenant Kuehle. We counted about three hundred men and were of all nationalities.

Now it may be very naturally asked why I, who had served in the British police of Kimberley and in the Diamond Field Rifles, should shift my allegiance and take cause with the Boers. First, I must explain my action without accepting any criticism or feeling any necessity to justify it by saying that I always deem it

right that one should become a citizen of the country in which one proposes making one's home, as I then looked forward to doing in the Transvaal. In the same way, in later years, just as soon as I came to the United States with my wife, I applied for citizenship here. Then, too, I always enter quickly into the life of the natives of any country, as I did into that of the blacks in the different sections of South Africa, and I have the tendency to see their problems and their interests with something of the same eye that they have for these things themselves.

So it was, when the war broke out in October of 1899, that I was not only ready to stand by my new citizenship as a Boer but was also more than ready to defend the Boer view of their country and their rights. It is not necessary for me to go into the history of the two republics of Orange Free State and the Transvaal, for that you can find in any book on the subject; but I do feel that the Boer side of this struggle has never been given quite the proportioning which it deserves.

Of course, the British cited certain reasons for their attack on the South African republics, prominent among them the complaint that the Boers would not grant them the right of franchise. But those who were on the ground looked upon this and all their other paper statements as just excuses to cover the real motive, which was the fact that the mountains of the Transvaal contained vast mineral wealth—much of which they were already de-

veloping—and they wanted consequently to have a dominating hand in the administration of the country within whose bournes the mines and further great possibilities lay. So, no matter what any one might have told the Boers or those of us who had thrown in our lots with them, to a man we all believed that they were fighting for their homes and for their country's independence from the domination of a stronger, bullying power. That great incentive and our firm determination to take advantage of every bit of knowledge we had about the country and the best method of fighting in it was what cost the British so dearly in the well-known battles of the war and what might have made them pay much higher still, had not peculiar counsels at times prevailed.

The British had been pouring troops into Natal and Cape Colony. It was only a matter of time before they would strike. So the Boer leaders decided to take the initiative and crossed the border in October, 1899, headed for Ladysmith and the Krantz Mountains to the west of the city. I never knew how many thousand strong we were. There were really not many thousands to be had. The second reinforcement that we received was already more women and children than men.

Everyone knows the chief events in the brave struggle the Boers put up, just as everyone knows most of the conditions under which the Boer army fought. Personally I saw practically all the major actions of the first few months of the struggle.

When we had bottled up General White in Ladysmith and taken to the mountains to intercept the relieving column of General Buller, our warfare became largely guerrilla in character and kept us swinging back and forth over the range, first to lend a hand around Ladysmith and then against Buller in one of his attempts to break through. Life in the Krantz was pleasant enough for the few months I was there, when we were not engaged in actual fighting.

General White had forty thousand men in Ladysmith and General Buller about an equal number in the relief-column. Our investing line around Ladysmith was so thin that a good strong rush by the British could have broken through at almost any time; but it would not have been good strategy for General White to abandon it, as it was the key to Natal.

Against their strong forces we had really but a few scattered thousands, and part of these had always to be moving from one side of the mountains to the other. Buller's forces lost pitifully in their attacks on the hills, where we lay behind the rocks and used our rifles and machine-guns with withering effect. Even their artillery did not do us great damage at any time. We could always see the English manoeuvering in the plains, as we moved rapidly along the heights to counter them. In practically all these fights we had the women to load and pass the rifles to us,

and in many cases they fought more doggedly and desperately than the men.

After the first three or four battles, which were very hot ones, many of the non-Boers left us. Those remaining said only, "Good riddance to bad rubbish," for they wanted none but those who had their hearts in the cause to stay and take the punishment with them. In general these Boers were a well-to-do people and very independent from their long contact with the life on the veldt. When we were in the mountains, though, we were a rough-looking lot, bearded to a man with hair enough to make us fearful in appearance at least. There were no safety-razors, or Y. M. C. A. luxuries in *that* army. I did not have a shave from the time I left Johannesburg until—well, until many months later.

These Boers, as you probably well know, all looked upon Holland as their Mother Country, though the South African republics were their immediate home. They spoke a Dutch so mixed with they were to receive. Personally I did not know later to my surprise, not understood by those speaking the pure tongue of Holland.

The whole army was made up of soldiers who fought without thinking or even knowing what pay they were to receive. Personally I did not know whether it would be five cents or five dollars per day. The one thing that kept us at our posts untiringly was the thought that the British were coming to dominate

the country which the Boers had built up for themselves and where they were now able to make good livings that would probably be done away with if the British should succeed.

As I told you a moment ago, there was one reason why the English got off as lightly as they did. General Joubert was very old and very religious. If a battle was on in which he thought the Boers were killing too many of the enemy, he would order his forces off and stop just where strategical advantages could often have been wrenched from the greatly superior forces. One day our Lieutenant Kuehle was summoned to headquarters and actually reprimanded for having slaughtered too many of the British in defence of the hill where we were being attacked.

General Botha, who came later into power, was different. He gave orders not to take any prisoners, as we had no food and no means of caring for them. As a matter of fact, we never did take any prisoners throughout all the months I was with the army.

We not only made the English pay dearly whenever they took ground from us, but also sometimes after they had won it. We once let them have Spion Kopje, after taking murderous toll of their ranks, only for them to find that we were still above them on the mountain and that their position was untenable. After further useless loss, they had no option but to retreat. The same thing happened at Colenso to General Buller's column. All through these move-

ments we had plenty of arms and machine-guns and used them with telling effect.

In one of these actions a British account I have read gave the enemy loss at forty-seven. I believe that the two women who loaded for me and I, firing as fast as they could pass me the rifles, accounted for more than that ourselves. And I was not so good a marksman as almost any of the Boers.

You want me to tell you more of these women at the front? Well it was different from any warfare of modern times, I imagine. They not only loaded for us in the firing-line, but during those first months of the war, while I was still in Krantz, they cooked for us. The result was that we had the best food that soldiers probably ever had on active campaign.

There were many farms in the Krantz and one in particular—with a German name something like Dusseldorf, as I remember it—where we used to get wonderful food when we went back from the front. Yes, we danced and had a good time generally, when the fighting was not too hot. The young Boers were fond of music, and many of them could make a tune on a harmonica. There were plenty of the young women and girls also to dance with, when the conditions permitted. And they were wonderfully fine women, too. There was not a breath of scandal or any of the conditions which are too apt to mark the life of an army. If anyone worried or embarrassed one of their womenfolk, the Boers would not have

hesitated a moment to turn their rifles on him. It was the extreme necessity which all felt for every one to fight for his or her country that kept these people in the field through all the hazards of war.

As must be well known to those of you who have read of this early stage of the struggle, the British might not have declared war for two or three months, if the Boers, seeing the massing of the troops near their borders, had not taken the initiative and seized all the strongholds they could. Consequently, when we went over the frontier to bottle up General White in Ladysmith and took up post in the Krantz Val, the country was quite normal and there was still a good bit of game on which to feed. But as the gun-fire became more and more severe, the animals all left the region.

One of the great disadvantages under which the British labored in these weeks of guerrilla fighting was the ineffectiveness of their artillery-fire. As we lay scattered ten or fifteen feet apart behind the rocks on the mountain side, their big shells could not create any great mass havoc among us. In that day the prodigal use of ammunition and the barrage-firing of the World War had not yet been developed, so that their expenditure of heavy shells was not compensated for by any proportionate damage to our lines.

At the outset I knew that we were only three thousand strong. Then Botha came with his force, but they were soon called away by attacks elsewhere.

I have no idea what our total strength was during these first months. Even if I had been an officer, I do not think I should have had accurate figures, as there was little information- or coordination-service between our scattered units. Among those who loaded for us and passed up the rifles were also great numbers of young boys. And when I say "young," I mean "young," because lads of only twelve and fourteen were often beside us in the firing-line and were frequently as good shots as some of the grown-ups. Of course, they were never used in any of our strategic night-moves or open actions, though some of them did manage to sneak out with us in spite of the commands of their elders to the contrary.

Yes, we had some artillery, and I saw a train of three- and seven-pounders as we started out from Johannesburg and crossed the border, though I never actually knew the number of our guns nor the force serving them.

Everyone knows that towards the end of the war the conditions for the Boers had become much harder, when they did not have such good food and when they were chased from one mountain fastness to another by the ever-increasing forces of the British. The English initial plan had been for General White to amass a large body in Ladysmith and then march over the border into Orange Free State. What we did by taking Colenso was to cut off his communications to the south and bottle him up. Three or

four times we captured his supply-trains and made big hauls of food, guns and ammunition. I was in several of these raids and shared with the others the big spreads we laid out after some particularly rich catch.

The British waste of supplies and men during the early stages of the war was something difficult to understand. They did not guard their transport trains sufficiently to protect them from our attacks and they sent their men in solid lines against us in the mountains long after they should have learned that it was futile to try to take us by storm. Those lines used to come on with a fearlessness and courage that made us admire them extravagantly, but they went back sickly-looking affairs, after they had tested the accuracy of our fire. Their courage was so far in excess of their officers' cleverness, in sending them up our slopes with such persistence, that we felt something approaching contempt for their generalship. During all the time I was with our Swedish battalion, we never had to retire from a single position until the day on which I was captured in one of the many engagements around Colenso. It was here that Buller had earlier made his second attempt to cross the river. On this particular day I had two horses shot under me. The place had already changed hands several times. It was only shortly after this engagement, as I remember it, that a small unit of thirty or forty of us were cut off from our main body and surrounded by a much superior force of British, who we

found to our great satisfaction *were* "taking prisoners" and sending them south. They herded us into closed and unlighted box-cars and rolled us away from the rocky kopjes and the mountains that had come to be our homes.

Where were they taking us and what would they do with us? No one knew, and none of us could tell from anything we heard through the walls of the cars what places we might be passing. We knew, however, the men who were dealing with us. Though they were not the friends of yesterday in the mines, they were of the same ilk and would give us a square deal of some kind. Yet prison for the term of the war was the very least we could expect. Perhaps, then, it would mean exclusion from the country for which we had fought with all that was in us.

The train stopped for two nights on the way and ran the better part of three days, as I recall it. They gave us food twice a day, and supplied us with drinking water in pails. A single bucket did not last five minutes during that heat in our shut-in car, and it was always a tremendously long wait to the next "watering-place." Though they did leave the door half open and had the space covered with a strong wire netting, we were still oppressively hot and thirsty. None of us were sure where we were going so that it was a surprise to find ourselves alongside the pier at Simon's Town. We had evidently been routed around to the east of Cape Town, through

some small junction, because I did not recognize any familiar landmarks until we approached this naval base on the shore of False Bay.

We were put into scows and taken directly on board the prison-ship that was lying some quarter or half-mile off shore. Of the many Boers that were captured on the day of our defeat at Colenso, there were three that could speak no English at all and were the bitterest in our little group. The five of us Swedes were less vitriolic and consequently were soon receiving better treatment at the hands of our captors. The Boers did not hesitate to call the English harsh names to their faces and never lost their resentment over what they looked upon as a war of pure aggression.

Naturally our one and first thought was to find out whither our ship was bound, for that would give us an idea of how we were to spend our next few years —in the tropics or on some remote island in the Pacific, for anything seemed possible at that moment.

Once I was parted from my beard, the most visible outward sign of my loyalty to the cause of the Boer, I began polishing up my English and started making friends with the members of the crew. They were as easy-going and good-natured as sailors are the world around and were not a little interested in the yarns we had to tell them of the way we had punished some of their countrymen. They dealt with us not only fairly in every way, but more as they would have treated members of their own fighting force, espe-

cially those of us who could speak some English and who showed no rancor at the turn affairs had taken.

With my sailor knowledge and talk and my willingness to lend a hand, it was not long before the guards looked upon me as a supernumerary of the crew. While all the other prisoners were compelled to sleep below and not permitted above certain limits, I managed to wriggle far enough into the good graces of the sailors to have freer run and to be allowed to sleep on the cooler and more airy upper deck.

All of my manoeuvering was but part of a well-thought-out plan of escape. One night the chance came. I was lying just close to where the gangway-ladder was lashed. We had learned that the ship was bound for Ceylon, when she had accumulated a load of us. I had scanned the shores carefully and observed the tide for many days, until I knew exactly how the currents ran and where they carried the sticks and other rubbish which I watched on the run of the flood. I made up my mind that I should take the chance of the waves and sharks, rather than the risk of remaining on the island of Ceylon for years or, perhaps, the rest of my life.

During the last week more and more prisoners had come aboard and told us of the progress of the fighting. Every one knew from the outset what the probable ultimate result would be, so that we were not surprised to see indications of it in these first months. That was the feature of this war which most embit-

tered those of us who were not so deeply concerned as the native Boers with their long-established homes in the country—the fact that these people realized probably from the very beginning that they could not hope to hold out forever against the greater numbers and resources of the British. Yet they would not give in without a desperate struggle. Perhaps it was poor judgment and not the best consideration for their own people; yet we who were beside them and saw their indignation could not but go with them the full length of their bitter way and their stubborn courage.

With so many men coming and the ship filling up, I realized we should soon be off. I had made up my mind to wait until the last night before the date fixed for sailing—as I thought they would be less apt to miss me in the bustle of preparation for the departure—and to take the risk of a guard's bullet and the water rather than submit to the conditions the imprisonment would impose. Yet I had no thought of trying to get back to the Boer army, as it all seemed to me now nothing but hopeless and useless slaughter on both sides.

The night before we were to sail was hot and calm. The sea and the bay were like one great mirror. During the day I had carefully watched the other ships in harbor swing to the tide and so knew exactly what time the evening flood would begin. There was a small river emptying into one corner of False Bay, which I had observed had a strong enough tide to be

exactly the place for which I should best lay my course.

As near as I can now remember, it was close to eleven o'clock when I sneaked along the upper deck, drew out the line I had hidden under my shirt, fastened it to the gangway-rigging and lowered myself slowly and noiselessly to the dark water below. No one seemed to have heard me before I felt the incoming tide running gently past my dangling feet. Once in without the least sound of splashing, I let myself sink below the surface and drifted under water as long as I could hold my breath. After coming up for air, I repeated this several times, until I realized that I must be well clear of the ship and her lights.

I recall vividly seeing her disappear in the distance, as I finally came to the surface and floated without going under again. Then something touched my side. I kicked vigorously and took as strong a stroke as I could. Thank fortune, it was not a shark that time, just a bit of floating débris. Two or three times this happened before I was well out of range of my guards there on the silent deck.

When I had thus floated for nearly half an hour, a big cloud seemed suddenly to obscure the light. To my surprise I found I was alongside another ship. I was making straight for her anchor-chains and the swell of her bows, so that I was forced to roll over and swim. Just as I was clearing her stern, I saw a lifeboat, riding there at the end of a long painter. I made

a quick turn to reach it and twice grabbed at it without catching hold. At last I managed to get a grip on the rudder and finally succeeded in pulling myself aboard. Once there, I kept perfectly still, as I could hear my own heart jumping and feared any moment that the watch on deck might easily have been attracted by my awkward splashings. For a long time I lay without a single move, fearing almost to breathe. Then I stealthily slipped off the only garments I had, trousers and shirt, and wrung them dry. I was soon glad to put them on again, as the night wind struck cold, after I had been in the water so long.

Having listened and heard no one on the poop above me, I began to investigate the fastenings of the boat and the possibility of loosening them. I had no knife or anything with which to cut or fray the rope, but, from my sailor experience knowing exactly how the eye-splice was made, I picked at it little by little until I succeeded in freeing the thimble. With nothing but my hold on the painter to keep us near the towering hull, I drew the boat up a bit towards the ship, so as to lay the line into the water without the least noise, and then let go.

Now I was no longer afraid of the sharks and the fish in the black waters; I was captain of my own craft, and God alone knew where we both would come to shore! I could see the rows of lights in the houses and along the streets of Simon's Town and began wondering whether I could make into my river before

the tide should turn. Just as soon as I was far enough away from the ship not to fear a little noise, I started investigating the equipment of my life-boat. To my joy I found one oar and then felt for and discovered a notch in the stern for sculling. So I turned my boat about and helped it along by gently weaving my single oar back and forth through the water.

Even at that it seemed to take an interminable time to come to land, and it was no doubt around two or three in the morning before I felt the keel scraping on the bottom. I made my way into the river and was straining my eyes along both banks for some sign of habitation. On my left I saw something that looked like a house, but I could not clearly make it out. It was there that I softly beached my craft, pulled her up and started stealthily up the bank to explore the lay of the land.

CHAPTER XIV

The Escape and Home!

As I came closer, I made out that it was a house of some kind. I had no wish or idea of being a night prowler or robber; but at that moment I had one driving thought, which was to exchange my prison-clothes for any other form of dress, native or foreign. Sneaking softly toward it, I saw that the building was a mere shack; but, even so, I could not yet determine whether it was inhabited and what precautions had to be taken against discovery.

So, working noiselessly around, I found a place where I could sit down in comfort and rest until the light should come and aid me. I dared not lie down for fear of going to sleep and being caught. After a time the sky seemed to lift and let in the light from under its eastern edge. Once more I started exploring. I first discovered that the door of the main house was padlocked, which clearly told me that there was no one there. Back of it there was a kind of small shack, or outhouse, where some clothes were hanging. This looked as though a servant or some one might be living on the place. As the light increased, my eyes fell on a length of iron that could be used as a crowbar.

With this I broke open the padlock and entered. The shanty consisted of two rooms. That into which I first came had a table, chairs, a stove and kitchen utensils of many sorts; yet everything looked as though no one had been there for some time. I found an old loaf of bread that I could not even put my sharp young teeth into. I kept it, however, and later soaked it, as it proved to be the only item in my larder that first day on shore.

By prowling through the other room I found a locker, or sort of cupboard, in which there were all the garments I was seeking. The owner was evidently a European, as all his clothes indicated this. But he was living in the country of the enemy whom I had been fighting and who were now trying to hold me captive, and was most probably one of them. So I considered it an entirely legitimate part of the warfare I was still waging against them to take whatever of their property I needed at the time. I fitted myself out with a coat, trousers, shirt and everything necessary. In his shoes I had, to my sorrow, to cut a hole for my big toes as they required more room than his.

Then I took good care to hide my prison-clothes, with their identification marks, where they could never be found. Perhaps the guards would not miss me on board and thus save me an extra amount of dodging those Cape Police. The moment I was clad in my new outfit, I set the boat adrift, in order that it could not be used to mark my course, and then struck

off to the east through the country, avoiding wherever possible the British and white population. I had a strong desire to see my old friends, the Freylinghuysens, and was actually on my way to their farm, when something turned me aside and warned me that it was better judgment not to go there.

After two weeks of hard walking, during which I begged my food wherever it seemed not too risky, I arrived at Mossel Bay, about two hundred miles to the east of Cape Town. It was there that I had been planning to risk approaching the fishermen to ask a place in one of their boats. But something more fortunate turned up, before I had worked out my scheme. A small coaster came into port. I went aboard and secured a job. This boat touched some days later at a town in Portuguese territory south of Lourenco Marques. When I learned that this was the most northern point in its run and that the captain was heading back into British waters, I went quietly ashore and struck once more into the country.

After four days of tramping I reached the bank of English River at a point where it was still very wide, which indicated clearly to me that I must be close to Delagoa Bay. On my second night out from the port where I left my ocean liner I came upon a kraal and asked for food. The natives not only fed me but took me in and treated me most hospitably. I needed rest, as the shoes which I had been wearing—which were some supplied me by good-hearted sailors on board

the boat to replace the ones through which my big toes stuck so boldly—had rubbed blisters on my feet. Both then and later during these four days I had to take them off and walk in my bare feet, wherever the going permitted it.

Following the directions which the blacks gave me I succeeded in the afternoon of this fourth day in crossing English River. From this point I followed a road that brought me to the railway-station, where I was surprised to find white men who could not understand a word that I said in any of the tongues I had at my command. Finally the natives had to interpret for us, as they could speak my brand of Kaffir and the other native dialect which the Portuguese spoke. After a very lengthy bit of talking for so small an idea, I made these men understand that I wanted to reach Lourenco Marques and that I had not a sou left with which to pay my fare. Between them they put together the few cents necessary for the ride of an hour or two and thus saved me another two days of my jungle tramping.

As it was evening when I arrived, I had to continue my country habits and sleep in the bushes along the shore, wondering whether the morrow would bring an end to all this or not. With the light I went down to the river for my morning wash and made myself as tidy as my limited means and my bedraggled clothes would permit. Then I entered the town. As the bank where I had deposited my valuables was still closed,

I searched out a barber near-by and told him that if he would kindly cut my hair and give me a shave, I would pay him as soon as the bank was open. That must have seemed a strange proposal from one who looked as thorough a bushman as I did at the moment, yet he accepted me as on the square and fell to. As he could speak broken English, I gave him the true story of my wanderings, without, however, disclosing the fact that I was a runaway prisoner. To crown his generous treatment of me when I greatly needed help, he gave me also enough change to have a good breakfast and a smoke.

When the bank finally opened, I identified myself by giving them the address to which I had asked them to send my mail and secured possession of the little key that meant control of the net proceeds of all my work in South Africa. I drew a fair sum of money and immediately sought out, first, my friendly barber and then a shop to fit me up once more with normal clothes. I bought a suit of white linen, a good cork helmet and all the little articles which went to make up a kit in those days. Then I had a good tuck-in of a dinner, a few drinks and sat down to wonder how I was going to get out of the country.

My new-found wealth must have been very evident, for I had to keep my eye peeled for two fellows that seemed to be laying for me that evening at the hotel. They may have taken my measure and decided to wait until the time was ripe for an attack, as I was not

disturbed during the night. The next afternoon, after having withdrawn from the bank all my funds and papers, I strolled down to the port and sat down to look over the craft in the anchorage. As I gazed vacantly out over the water, I saw a boat put away from a small steamer lying in the stream and make for the wharf just below me. Two men were rowing and a third in the sternsheets had the tiller-ropes. When they left the officer at the landing and were preparing to return, I hailed the men, fell to talking with them about their bark and, when I found she was a Norwegian, asked them to take me on board. I bought them drinks, and they took me along without further ado.

As soon as we were in the fo'castle, I got several of the crew together and told them I was in trouble.

"If you treat me right," I remember saying to them, "and let me stay here until we are well out to sea, when I can talk with the captain, I'll give you all a pound apiece." Some hesitated a bit, while others were ready to accept my proposal and finally carried the day. I gave them their pound each, at the same time pretending that this was all I had. Then I hid in the fo'castle until the ship was well out on the high sea.

About the third day from port I appeared before the captain, who was a man of the old school from Christiansand, religious and thoroughly fine in every respect. He showed no surprise at having a stowaway on board, though he did give the crew a grand old

calling-down for keeping me under cover without reporting me. I offered the "old man" five pounds, if he would take me to Batavia, whither I had by this time learned he was bound. He did not seem much moved by my proposal one way or the other, but just took the gold and set me to work.

In a little while I was scraping down the masts, chipping iron rods, taking in sail with the best of the men in the storms and doing everything but protecting my white linen suit. Heavy as I was, I always felt proud of my ability to go to the very top, no matter what the weather. It was not long before the old man knew he had an A.B. in his stowaway and soon had me taking my turn at the wheel, helping the sailmaker, splicing rope and painting ship. I was enjoying it all hugely after the far-from-comfortable days in the war and during the prison experience following it and naturally did everything to work myself into the good graces of the captain.

The vessel was a barque of from twelve to thirteen hundred tons, I should say, though I cannot, try as I will, remember her name. Whether my lesson with the French Canadian on the Natal railway was really proving effective or whether it was just my joy at getting back to sea, I do not dare to say; yet it is true that I had no fights on board this ship, which was a record for me.

When we were twenty-four days out of Lourenco Marques, we ran into Sunda Straits, which separate

the islands of Sumatra and Java. Then we followed along to the port of Batavia on the latter. It is a rather significant fact that the one thing which sticks in my mind of our entry into the harbor is the small boats that came alongside offering for sale cane-sugar, rolled into balls. In those days this element in the sailor's ration was so small—one pound a week—that he craved it more than anything else, a fact which the natives of these sugar-producing countries always capitalized to their gain. It is only fair to the old captain to add that he gave me the same ration and the same good treatment that he accorded all the rest of the crew throughout the voyage.

The moment we dropped anchor, he went ashore and had a talk with the consul, who informed him that it was impossible for me to land on the island, unless he would deposit the three hundred guilders necessary to insure my transport to Europe in the event of my becoming a public charge. So the captain returned later and asked me if I would be satisfied to accept a certain sum as a member of the crew. If so, he would take me to the consulate and sign me on the articles as a man before the mast. What was I to do, I had told the captain an out-and-out lie to get free of the African country, and now he had been so very decent to me that I shrank from showing him that I had been deceiving him all the time. I could do nothing but agree to go ashore and have a talk with the consul. If the latter did not see fit to let me

land I would sign the articles and go along with the ship to Australia.

The captain proposed that we go right away, as he wanted to clear the harbor the first thing in the morning. Knowing what was in my mind, I said good-bye to the crew with more of sincerity than any of them would put into their adieus to me.

"Oh, you'll be back and off with us to Australia," was the only answer they would give to my leave-taking. At the consulate I tried to edge and keep the captain in ignorance if I possibly could, but my plans went awry. To do this I spoke to the consul in Dutch and explained to him that I was a naturalized Boer, had been fighting with them and was an escaped prisoner. To my disappointment I found that my Boer language was not understood by this pure-blooded Hollander and that I must finally repeat in English before the captain all I had been saying. In spite of this the consul persisted in his refusal to let me land without the money guarantee.

Now in Lourenco Marques I had bought another article which I have not mentioned, a money-belt. Though seldom seen in western countries, it is a familiar enough object in the Orient and in wild regions like those of South Africa. It is usually made of canvas, has several little pockets all along the front and sometimes, as was true of the one I secured, straps that go up over the shoulders to take the weight of the coin that one may be carrying. Nor did I make

it clear that I took all my funds from the bank in five- and ten-pound notes and gold sovereigns, a total of something over two thousand pounds. It was their presence around my waist that may have made me more wary in the rigging and less bellicose in the fo'-castle than I had been in earlier days at sea.

Consequently when I saw that all my means had failed with the consul, I asked to be excused, pulled up my shirt, worked the belt loose and opened one pocket after another, letting the sovereigns roll out on the big table around which we sat. When I had a pile of notes and gold on the table, I asked the consul:

"Is it enough?" He waved his hand and answered:

"Put it up. You're a safe citizen."

I had tried every way to avoid this show-down before the captain, but had failed. When he saw the real conditions under which I had been fleeing the east coast, he was even kindlier than ever and took me down to a ship-chandler friend and told him to treat me well in rigging me out with new canvas. I seemed always to be buying new outfits in this wandering, masquerading life I was living. I took leave of the dear old sea dog with real regret and untold gratitude for his help.

When I had all my new sails stretched, I asked the ship-chandler for the name of a good hotel. In response he gave me bearings on one where all the Europeans ate and set me on my course. That dining-room appeared to me as the biggest I had ever seen.

The tables were full twenty feet long and seemed to stretch all the way to the horizon—and I was perfectly sober when I sighted it the first time. Once I saw such a magnificent opportunity to eat, I immediately put myself on the passenger-list and secured a cabin in the garden in a row of bungalow rooms that opened on a covered verandah.

And there I *lived* for two or three days, as few men have ever lived, no matter whether they were sailors just ashore from a long cruise or lords of the richest manors. I was not only a real, honest Jack-Tar ashore after nearly a month on a wind-jammer, but I was in a neutral country after an escape from a prison-ship and, more than all that, away from the roughness of nearly a decade of every imaginable physical hardship and danger that one could face. As I moved in the orderly, cleanly and normal surroundings of the big hotel and the well-organized Dutch colonial city, again and again I lived over in my mind the days in Kimberley, the tragedy of my carelessness towards Anna, the fighting in Bulawayo, the months in the mine with McKinnon—good Lord! he too was a Britisher and would have been in the ranks that charged us at Spion Kopje, if I had not laid him beneath another rock, hundreds of miles away.

And the kraals with my friends in them—real friends, with hearts as white as any man's, the people whom others lashed, just because they happened to be in power over them. I wanted to go back and fight

those same men who were now pressing the Boers back into the hills which would ultimately see their surrender. There could be no other result. Poor Boers! Their countrymen here in Java and elsewhere over the world felt for them in their distress—but that was all. They expected aid not only from the Hollanders of Amsterdam and Batavia, but also help and sympathy from the United States and some of the European countries, which they thought would surely come to fight with them to keep their homes.

I knew the Britishers in South Africa and their great chief, Cecil Rhodes, and liked him well. I knew the Robinson brothers and was genuinely indebted to them for their help in setting me up in business in Johannesburg. I had hundreds of friends among the Kimberley police and the miners all over the country. They were all men whom I trusted and against whom I held nothing personally. But collectively somehow they seemed not to be right in their driving policy of conquest. They had the strength and they would treat the conquered fairly, once the latter bowed; but I could not square myself with their willingness to go in and make them bow. It was for the glory of the Union Jack and for the benefit of their mining-company dividends; but that seemed always terribly hard to me, when I thought of those Boer women and children who used to pass us the loaded rifles on Spion Kopje and elsewhere along the stony ridges.

God, how my heart bled to think of those people

still fighting with their women and girls behind them, just because a bigger power came and told them to give over! . . . I'd go back. That was all I could do and be fair to my own self. . . . But then, would I? I would shoot down more dozens of those clean-shaven, machinely-trained, dapper-uniformed English lads and Scotch highlanders—for what? To be captured again in the end or shot down myself, without the ghost of a chance of accomplishing anything but prolonging the struggle and bloodshed and postponing the end that must come.

So I just sat and looked over the city and drank my beer, wondering why the good Lord let men's minds run in such feelingless channels. There were the blacks—yes, *my* blacks, "nigger lover" that they called me—how would they meet this invasion? But I could not help them. I was too poorly equipped. I was single-handed and too impetuous. I could fight a sailor and floor almost any one I met, until that fellow in Kimberley and the French Canadian taught me there were other powers in the world beside myself. So again I sat and sipped my drink and dreamed of going home. How long was it since I had been among my own people? Nearly ten years—impossible! I would go and find a ship the very first thing in the morning.

But I came very close not to going home at that time—or at all—for that night I had the pleasure of meeting a Malay of over six feet who came near to

stopping my travel as passenger and sending me back before the mast for another term of wandering. It was along in the quiet of the morning hours, when I was awakened by someone prying up my window. He got in before I could stop him and was on me in a flash. Until you go up against a man bigger than yourself, when you have no shoes or clothing on, you do not know the handicap of fighting naked—that is, in pajamas only. I never did until I tackled that fellow—or rather was tackled by him, for he rushed at me in the dark like a great bull.

We were at close quarters before I was more than well awake. We struck, dodged and finally clinched. I tried all the tricks which my years in the fo'castle and the camp had taught me. We went finally to the floor together. I broke away in the fall and was on him with a chair. The furniture went to pieces under our blows. Still no one came, and I was beginning to wonder how much longer I could stand the pace. It was not light enough for me to make use of the strategy that might have been mine in an open fight. He rushed me with his sheer weight and mass. I was getting winded and was badly cut and bruised about the head and shoulders.

All this time the money-belt around my waist was just within his grasp. One good blow sent home, and he had all that my ten years in Africa had netted me. Would he get it? Not if I could keep from going out, for nothing short of losing consciousness would

make me give up what I had fought so long to gain.

We were in another clinch and rolled once more on the floor. By merciful good luck the remnants of a chair lay within reach of my right hand, if I could get it free. Two of the legs were broken. I managed to grab one of them and wriggle far enough out of his grasp to give him a smashing blow on the crown of his head. He relaxed and let go his hold. I thought I had knocked him out and pulled myself loose to cry for help. But the second was not long enough. The man was up in an instant and bolted for the window before I could reach the door and open it. I was rid of him, at least, though I would have given a pretty penny to have stopped him.

When one of the hotel servants arrived, I was too spent to do any pursuing. I just sat down and bathed my wounds. But I would not sleep longer in that room. If there was a gang of them working together like the one I had met, I did not care to risk having them come back later on. So I insisted on being moved to other quarters for the rest of that disturbed night.

Bank-draft? Let me think. No, I don't believe I even knew of such a thing as a bank-draft or a letter of credit in those days. True enough, we had always handled our money in Africa by cheques. We were even paid in them at most of the mines, but I had not come into contact with the need for international drafts and things of that sort.

In matters of this nature I was almost as primitive then as the African natives among whom I had lived those many years. You wonder how they carry their money, when I tell you that they wear no clothes in which they could have any pockets. I was simply following their example with the money-belt. But theirs are much smaller, unobtrusive affairs. They are made of skin and take the form of a small armlet or leg-band and have just enough place for the two or three gold pieces which they may have earned by the work with the whites. The moment they accumulate a few, they do not hoard them but go at once and buy some cows, which, as I have told you, are the real measure of wealth among both tribes and individuals.

In the morning I heard through one of the hotel men that word had somehow gone abroad among the natives that I was carrying a big swag with me. That fixed my determination to get away at once. The whole thing taught me another good lesson—never to flourish my money among strangers again. That day I was not looking for amusement in the town or hotel, but for the railway-station where I could get a train to Otaje Priark, the shipping port of Batavia. There I found a neat-looking little steamer bound for Singapore and took passage on her, glad to be away and out of reach of any more Malays of the build and strength of my hotel caller.

When we made Singapore, I took a rickshaw and was a very different sport from the one that swaggered

around Batavia. I was poor now, so broke that I had to take a room in the sailors' home and fall back on the well-established custom of asking them to trust me for my board until they could take it out of the first month's wages from the ship I might secure. I even bummed my tobacco and everything else of the sort. Once in a while, however, I sneaked away to a distant part of the town and there had a good meal in a better-class hotel or restaurant and then had a look at Malay Street, just to keep up my spirits.

While thus waiting for a ship, I was advised by a doctor that my long residence under the tropics and the serious illnesses I had undergone there made it dangerous for me to think of returning to Sweden at the coldest season of the year. So I had no option but to loaf away a few more weeks in the port before succeeding in signing myself on. After nearly two months of playing about in the Chinese town, the native tea-houses and the usual haunts of stranded sailors, I finally did manage to get a ship, the *Eva* from Bergen, Norway, of not over three thousand tons. I went again before the mast with the comforting thought that I was only playing at the game of sailor, which had earlier been so serious a one for me. I figured that, if we did not go too fast, I should be home in Sweden just in time for my birthday on May 18th.

There was nothing in that voyage that could interest me save the ticking of the days off the calendar. My thoughts were now only of home. I had no great part

in the real life of the fo'castle, though none of the others knew that my mind was far away. I used to like to go up into the bows at night and lean over the rail, wondering how it was going with my poor fellow-countrymen in the Krantz Val or along the Tugela.

Once through the Canal and the Mediterranean, we were soon pulling into Havre, where I was again in a place with only white men and "white" surroundings for the first time in many years. And my belt was safe. In addition I had a small amount as a memento of my last voyage before the mast. I made my way through Hamburg to Copenhagen, where I changed my English money into something over thirty-five thousand Swedish kroner. With these as the new "jewels" of the "diamond belt" for which the Malay and I had fought, I arrived in Stockholm on May 17th, just the day before I was thirty years old. With these kroner I also laid the foundations of the new and normal life which was to be built upon the rough years at sea and in Africa. These remnants of the abandoned shaft and other ventures allowed me to buy a home, marry and settle down—as much as a sailor and an African wanderer ever does. But it is the body alone that stays at home; the spirit is more often sailing the seas or trekking the veldt.

THE END

B
HEDLUND Palen, Lewis S.
Water and gold

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